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The Games machine

THE FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS

TX: 014 JANUARY 1989

MARTIAL ARTS ACTION



TGM PREDICTS THE FUTURE

ASTROLOGICAL SOFTWARE

TGM GAME AWARDS

37 REVIEW PAGES

TOYS FOR YUPPIES

Mel Croucher on the dog and bone

PHILADELPHIA COMMODORE SHOW TGM Reports

PUT A DIGIT IN AND DIAL 0898 - 555080 WIN A SEGAMASTER SYSTEM! DETAILS INSIDE

WIN! A Who Dares Wins weekend

Yet another Amiga A500

THE GAMES MACHINE is a dedicated multi-format computer games magazine covering Atari ST, Commodore 64/128 and Amiga, All Spectrums, IBM PC and compatibles, MSX, Amstrad CPC, Nintendo, Sega, and PC Engine

The Games machine

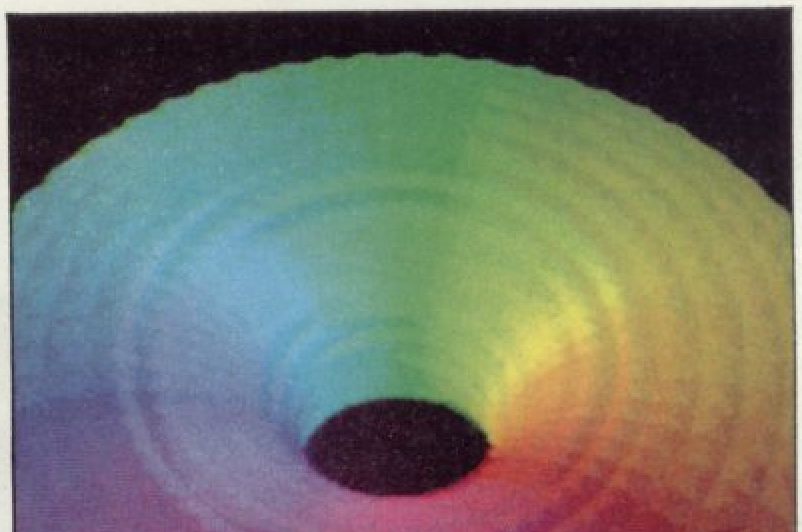
THIS ISSUE . . .

REGULARS

GOD BLESS AMERICA

PAGE 18

Because that's where TGM tracked down the Commodore show – and was amazed by the likes of *ComicSetter* and *LIVE*



GUPPIES!

PAGE 24

Not land-dwelling fish but a new word for a new breed of homo sapiens. The guppie hasn't lived unless he's owned an ultrasonic flea collar or a phone that works in the bath. TGM delves into the awful electronic truth



We hope you like TGM's new logo and bigger and brighter image, but, be assured the changes are far from being simply cosmetic. Games reviewing at TGM is second to none because TGM game reviewers don't just play games, they eat breathe and sleep them! What's more, if you're a regular reader you'll know we don't prejudge a game simply because of the sales hype, or because we favour a certain format.

Turn to the reviews section of this issue: a record breaking 37 pages including no less than five Sega games, plus the amazing *R-Type 2* on PC Engine. We hope you'll find the new TGM awards useful too. They're not just designed to look pretty but to tell you, instantly, what are the best games around and what to leave on the shelf.

TGM has always been first with the news, and this issue is no exception. Inside you'll find exciting details of the Atari ST Plus, the ST console and the Amiga console (as for the Sharp 68000, unless you have £1500 to spare and live in Japan you may as well forget it).

Also inside, Mel Croucher takes his customary anarchic look at the world with *The Gift of the Guppie* (an alarm clock that turns off when you shout at it? Now that's what I *call* progress); TGM goes trans-Atlantic with an exclusive Commodore show report and TGM's telephone promotion gives you the chance to win a Sega Master System – so get your digit in the dial. Still on the subject of competitions, we're giving away yet *another* Amiga and a trip to *Who Dares Wins* - where pretending to kill people has never been so much fun!

Back Bytes continues to bring you essential information on hardware and peripherals, and this month there's a full guide to printers.

If you've been with us from issue 1 I'm sure you'll find TGM a bigger, better, more informative magazine. If you've just joined us, welcome aboard. You have in your hands the *only* multi-format games magazine that takes games, and itself seriously.

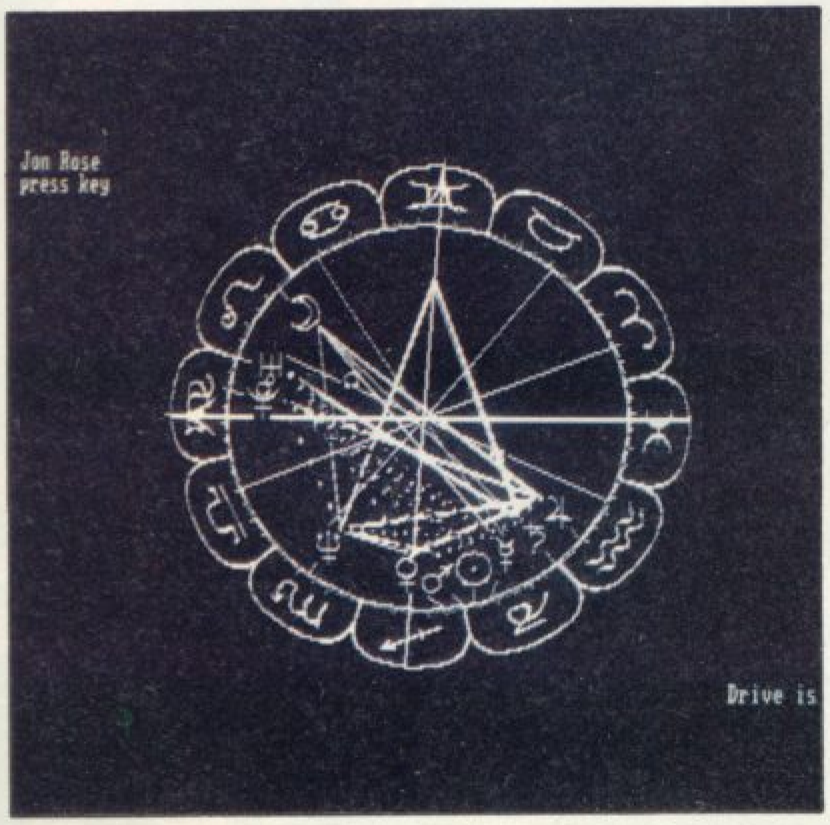
Have a Happy Christmas,

Jon Rose
Editor

THE FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS

DIAL THIS NUMBER: 0898 555080 and you could win a Sega Master system! See page 28 for details

FEATURES



WIN!

A WHO DARES WINS WEEKEND

Courtesy of Infogrames. Kill the enemy, trap your own food, dodge bullets and bombs and still get home in time for tea
See page 20

WIN!

SURELY NOT? YES! ANOTHER AMIGA

Thanks to Epyx, plus 20 copies of *The Games Summer Edition* for the runners up.
See page 112

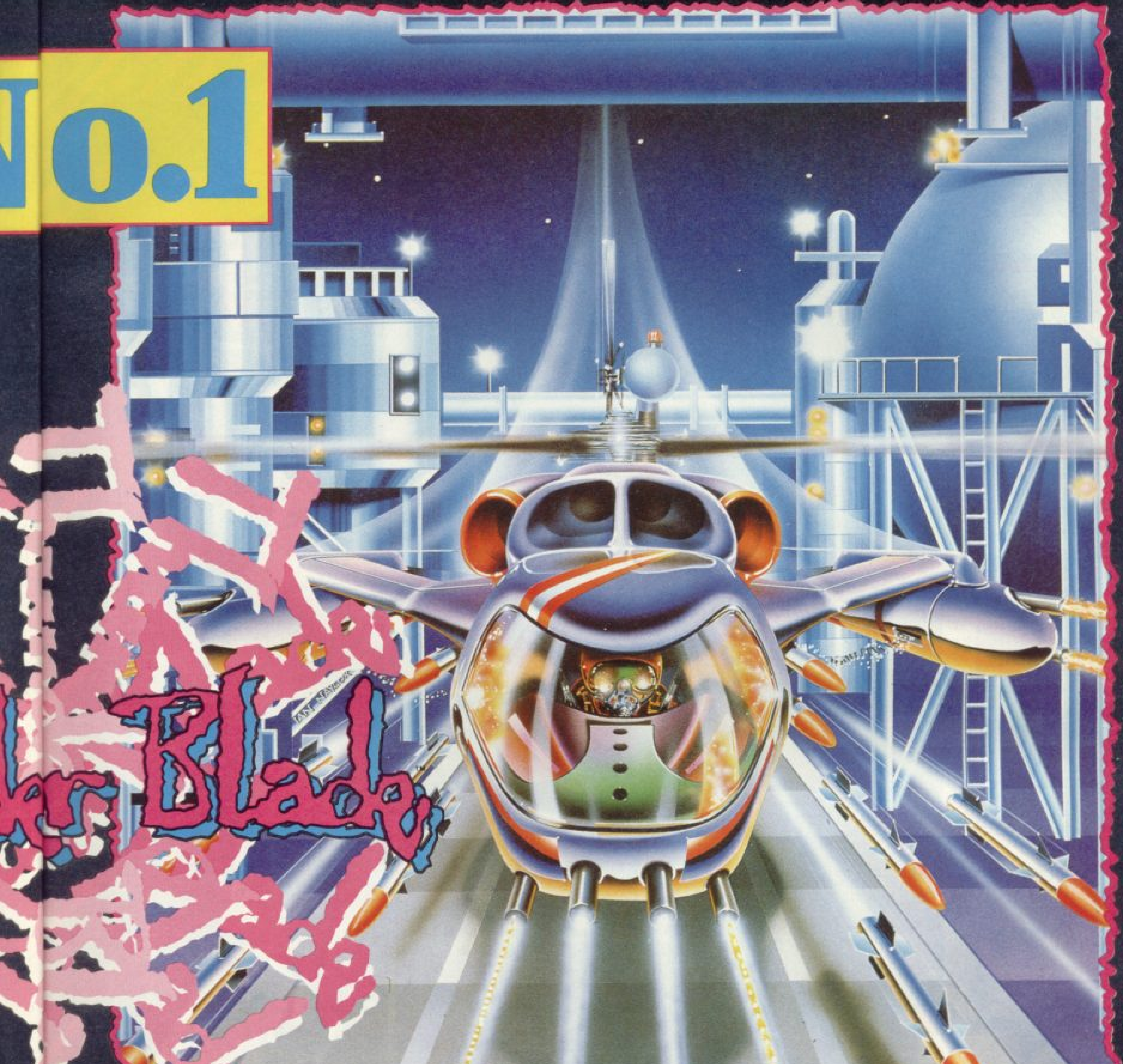


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Cover design by Oliver Frey

hine ever to storm the skies ...

No.1



Screen shots from various formats.



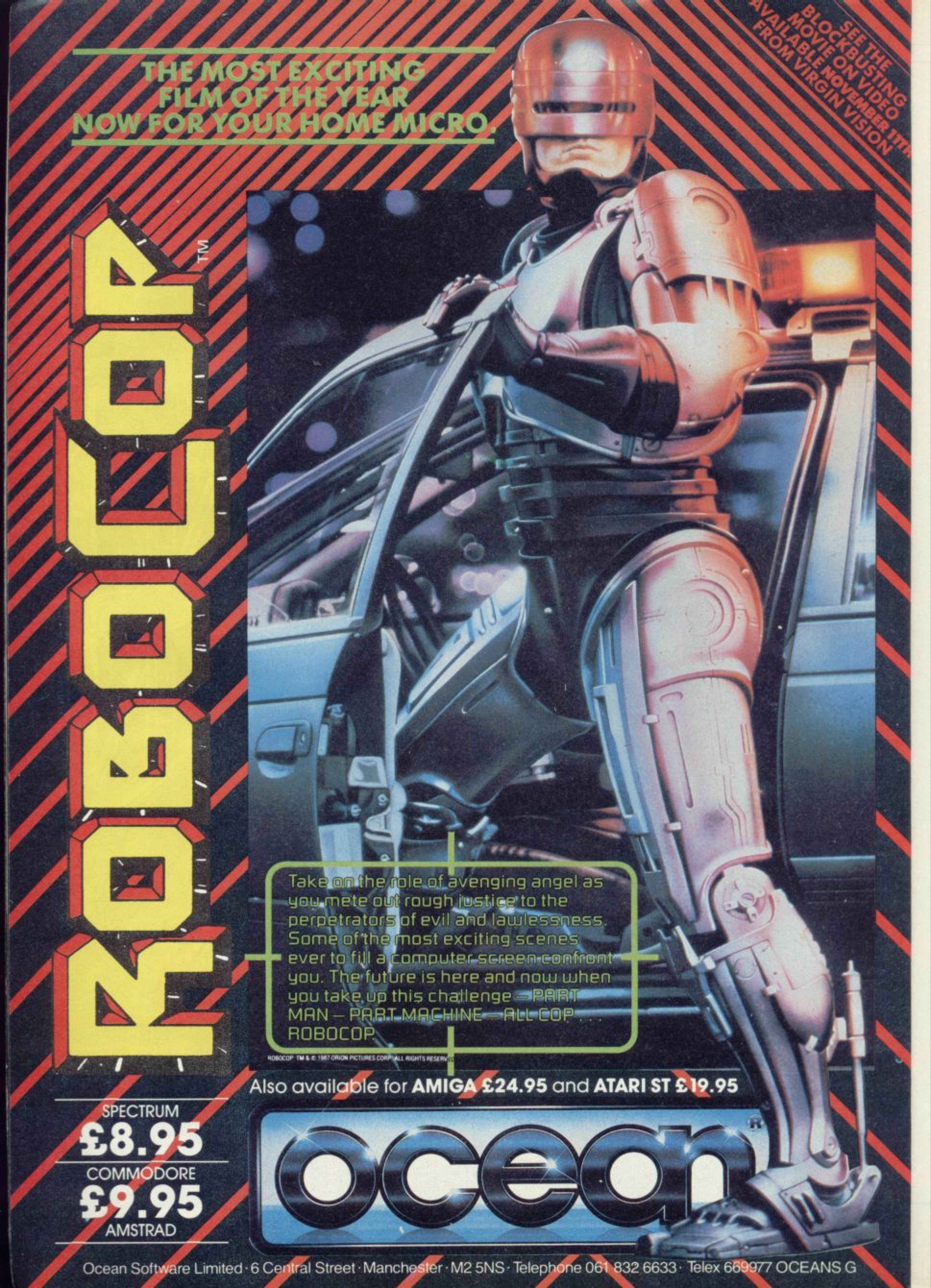


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Slipstream to run £15 disk games – in 3-D

by Barnaby Page

More details are emerging of the supposedly secret Slipstream console from joystick manufacturer Konix – and its extraordinary set of add-ons.

The £149 console, due to be on sale in the autumn of 1989, will apparently use a standard 3-inch disk (as found in Amstrad CPCs, PCWs and the Spectrum +3) as well as cartridges.

And Konix are believed to prefer disk-based software. Disks are cheaper than cartridges – software prices for the Slipstream will range from £15 to £25. An anticopying device in the disk mechanism will prevent piracy.

Boasting up to 4,096 colours onscreen without lost speed, a 3-D zoom facility built into the hardware, and CD-quality stereo output, the Slipstream's specification has impressed all who've seen it.

Internally, it has four customised chips, a central 16-bit processor from Motorola's 68000 family running at 18 million instructions per second (mips), and a blitter chip running at 70 mips.

The report of a 68000 processor – as found in the ST and Amiga – contradicts earlier suggestions that it would be a PC-style 8086 chip.

3-D vision

As for peripherals, besides the sub-£100 hydraulic chair mentioned in TGM**012**'s exclusive report there will be a multifunction joystick, and a helmet providing 3-D vision with built-in speakers.

'The machine itself has a multipurpose joystick,' said a source who has seen the console's specifications. 'It can be used as a flight controller. You can switch it to the steering of a car. You can put two parts of the console on the floor as pedals.'

The Slipstream, which comes with a light gun, is said to resemble 'a console inside a joystick' – whatever that means.

So far so good

However, software houses keen to join the Slipstream bandwagon may run into problems with Konix. The firm, based in south Wales, is apparently looking more to American software houses such as Broderbund, Mindscape and Activision after a series of leaks which it believes came from British software producers.

One reliable source says that the only UK software house already signed to produce a Slipstream game is US Gold. Two other European companies, in France and West Germany, are also working on software for it, while a further 30 or so firms are interested.

Software houses will not be able to produce Slipstream games without Konix's permission, because each game will use special code to 'unlock' the Slipstream and load the software. People could copy the code from one game but it wouldn't work with another.

In concept, this is similar to the device Nintendo use to prevent unauthorised firms producing Nintendo software. However, Nintendo's 'lock' mechanism relies on a 'key' in the actual physical cartridge, rather than the code – and several UK engineers have now got around it.

Konix's Wyn Holloway: his secret's out



Konix console: key points

- Highly praised for graphics and sound
- Imaginative peripherals including hydraulic chair and 3-D helmet
- 16-bit processor
- Extremely fast blitter chip for graphics-handling
- £149 price, with disk games starting at £15
- Released late summer 1989

Atari promise an ST console for mid-'89

In about six months, Atari will launch a sub-£100 console based on 16-bit ST technology.

Details are scarce, but the cartridge-based console is expected to be compatible with existing ST software (meaning that ST games can easily be converted). And the games, costing around £25 each, will mostly be arcade action.

But it doesn't spell the end of the ST – it's a games machine only. An Atari spokesman told TGM: 'We aren't going to kill the golden calf that the console was originated from – the console is aimed at the younger person who is not proficient in the ways of the ST and hence the console will prove very user-friendly.'

■ In another variation on the ST theme, Atari were cautiously showing their portable ST – nicknamed Stacey – at the Comdex trade show in Las Vegas, USA, last month.

It's reportedly a 1040 STF in a different box and with an LCD display. The only other difference – apart from the smaller size – is the fact that it uses a trackball instead of a mouse, which would need more space to move around. (A trackball is, essentially, like the roller on a mouse's underside – you rotate it in your palm.)

The British-designed Stacey is, of course, not the first Atari product to be whispered about and shown to a select few without being released. Remember the CD-ROM player they've been promising?

The ST: soon to be a console



Viva video! Microdeal have released *Viva*, a £399 software package which helps you create interactive laser-disk games (as if you **really wanted to**). TGM expects this to be the next big thing – that is, after the 2,003 other next big things.

Starstruck: US Gold, who despite their name are more at home on the mean streets of Birmingham than the wide open prairies, are getting a bit more **American** . . . in a deal with California-based Lucasfilm Games.

US Gold will release six games from *Star Wars* director George Lucas's software stable in 1989, including *Zak McKraken And The Alien Mindbenders* and air-fighter *Battlehawks – 1942*.

Those will be on 16-bit and C64 only, but future titles including *Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade* (expected for autumn 1989) will appear on Spectrum and CPC too.

Domark are the software house currently associated with Lucas, thanks to their various *Star Wars* coin-op conversions (most recently *Return Of The Jedi*), but maybe the US Gold empire has finally struck back.

Amiga meets PC: Yet another Amiga model is due to be on sale in 1989. The Amiga 2000AT has an IBM PC-AT emulation mode (**thrilling**, eh?), which to the blissfully uninitiated means it can run virtually all PC software.

Only disadvantage is it that it's reported to have a 5.25" disk drive – rapidly becoming unpopular, as software houses and users grow to favour the 3.5" inch standard. A price of some £1,500 is expected. What **thrills**!

Charity corner: Remember *Soft Aid*, *Off The Hook* and *Kids Aid*? All were game compilations **donating** proceeds to charity (hunger, drug abuse and child abuse respectively) – and now another is planned for 1989. This time, the beneficiaries will be autistic children. Watch this space for details.

Satellite cheat: Generous old Amstrad, already producing a £199 satellite dish for Rupert Murdoch's four Sky channels, are producing a descrambler for other channels . . . so you can watch them **free**.

But you'll have to have a new £10-odd card every month – which may not be such a **bargain**. Back in TGM**010**, Maxwell Satellite Communications suggested that average payments for receiving 16 channels on *their* satellite dish could be as little as £5 a month.

PRESS ANY KEY

Atari show 'was crap, nothing outstandingly new': Well, that's what our reporter reported. Seems, though, that Microdeal are producing a video-frame-grabber which will let you take images from, say, *E.T.*, and use a graphics package to convert them into something utterly **obscene**.

Strange thing is, Microdeal will only release it if they can make it **cheap** – that's never stopped some people!

Microdeal created a stink, or at least a vague **odour**, before the show. They objected when US Gold and Ocean planned to send representatives to the event's 'games workshop', a tutorial do for programmers – even though they didn't have stands. The two software houses were subsequently uninvited.

The last straw: When System 3 put rubber shurikens (deadly throwing stars) in 25,000 'limited edition' copies of *Last Ninja 2*, Boots decided mystic oriental violence didn't go too well with the nappies and nourishing soups. So they **refused** to take the shuriken version of the C64 game.

Other retailers have removed it from the box, or stuck warnings on the front, believing it to be dangerous. Moral: when you wish for sales upon a star, check with the chain stores first.

Permanent PC show: People who have nothing better to do than look at off-white boxes can now do so all year round, thanks to Eagle Business Computers. Eagle have opened what they claim is Britain's first permanent **computer display centre**; mostly business machines, but a home micro section too.

Just stand and **gawp** at Glamorgan House, David Street, Cardiff.

On the lines: Not only can long-distance addicts now play interactive *Shades* on MicroLink, they can also access 120 pages of **MIDI** music info on PRESTEL. *MidiSpot*, run by the British Association of Computer Clubs, starts at page 810921; to jump in, just type *MIDISPOT#.

It's enough to make us want to buy a modem; so read what's new in networkland in **future** TGMs.

What if they gave an Amstrad Computer Show and nobody came? Database Exhibitions know the feeling (almost) – 9,000 people turned up to the show at Manchester's G-Mex from October 21 to 23, more than 1,000 under last year's figure.

We think they all stayed in front of the **fire** to play with Amstrad's Sinclair Professional PC 200, ideal for home *and* office use too!

Problems lurk for Sinclair +2/PC buyers

Amstrad and chain store Comet have run into criticism over hardware problems and bundled software for the Sinclair range.

Amstrad's first problems arose in mid-November, when it was realised that new Spectrum +2s – called +2As, and recognisable by their black casing – are incompatible with many Spectrum peripherals.

This is because the new +2A uses the +3 circuit board, and the +3's expansion slot pins are different from the old +2's.

There are now four ROM select lines (used so an add-on's software can control the computer), whereas the old +2 had only two. And there is no 9V output to power peripherals.

It's also been suggested that graphics and sound code in some software may not work with the +2A.

Despite these problems, the +2A is being sold in the same packaging as the old +2 – so potential purchasers should check inside the box that their +2 is grey, not black.

On the good side, the Spectrum changes do mean that the +2A has a Centronics parallel printer port – like the +3, unlike older +2s.

Many observers are speculating that the circuit-board switch means Amstrad are trying to get rid of unused +3 boards – presumably because the +3 isn't selling well.

Comet charge

Meanwhile, at least some Comet stores have apparently been selling the Sinclair Professional PC 200 (TGM**012**) without its essential software: the MS-DOS operating system, GEM 3 environment and GW-BASIC language.

One reader who contacted TGM said 'it's a poor state of affairs when you buy a machine for £343 and it's useless'. The reader, who lives in East Sussex, said he had been told he would have to wait several weeks for the software.

At press time, neither Amstrad nor Comet headquarters were available for comment.

But Mark Campbell, Assistant Manager at Comet in Eastbourne, told TGM that after some delays the software had finally been shipped to Comet stores. People who have a PC 200 without the software should now be able to pick it up from the branch where they bought it.

■ Soon after the +2A problem became known, Miles Gordon Technology released a £7.95 interface adapter board, which will enable +2A owners to use their Plus D disk interface. MGT's board, which may work with some other add-ons, disables two ROM select lines and restores the 9V power output.

But designer Paul Thomas warns that slight problems may arise when using the Plus D and 128 BASIC mode (called '+3 mode' on the +2A). For instance, error messages cause the BASIC to revert to 48K mode.

Miles Gordon Technology: *Lakeside, Phoenix Way, Swansea Enterprise Park, Swansea SA7 9EH* ☎ (0792) 791100.

Comet: 'sorry, no software'?



Amiga shines at US show

by Marshal M Rosenthal in Philadelphia



Bizarre: First Row Software's The Twilight Zone (Amiga screen)

November's Commodore show Stateside was highlighted by Amiga graphics – both for the artist and the game-player. And top of the games list for graphics come Mindware's *Charon 5* and First Row Software's *The Twilight Zone*.

Charon 5 requires quick reflexes, with the action taking place on 11 levels totalling 5,400 colour screens. The same software house's *Aunt Arctic Adventure* has you battling to rescue your aunt from the evil Arctic circus – watch out for Big Boris!

The Twilight Zone combines text adventure with static graphics on the Amiga, to recreate the mood and mystery that comes from dimensions not only of sight and sound, but of mind. Participate in the convoluted and bizarre – while dreading the patented 'twist ending'.

Those more inclined to humour will enjoy the interactivity of *Jackie Gleason's The Honeymooners*. Like *The Twilight Zone*, this First Row Software game is also slated to appear on the C64 in early 1989.

Nifty also is *Dragon's Lair*, from ReadySoft – six disks of high-quality cartoon animation, strategy and arcade action.

You know how good that one can be, so 'nuff said. But a few words about *Scary Mutant Space Aliens From Mars*, okay? Text combines with digitised graphics to make this a fun, if slightly silly, adventure. There are animated fighting sequences – but best of all, real aliens are included in every box!

Audiogenic just want girls to have fun

If you're unlucky in love you'll turn to computing – at least, that's the theory of software boss Peter Calver.

Calver, Managing Director of Audiogenic, explained: 'It tends to be the loners who buy the computer to fill in the spare evenings. In my experience, women have no trouble finding boyfriends while men can't find girlfriends – so men have more time to kill.'

But Calver would like even the girls to start killing time (and maybe aliens) with Audiogenic games. So he's planning to produce more 'cuddly games' like *Helter Skelter* (TGM**011**), and sports simulations with female athletes as sponsors.

'I think the whole aura that surrounds computers is male-oriented,' observed Calver. 'Even when you have got women involved they tend to get desensitised and brainwashed.'

Twice the number of bits

Meanwhile, Audiogenic are going further into 16-bit in a bid to 'shake off the dust and get out of the rut'.

Calver told TGM that the software house, formerly a BBC specialist and once known as ASL, will be producing fewer games – but more high-profile ones.

'In 1987,' Calver said, 'we produced one product worth shouting about – *Impact*. This year, we produced two worth shouting about – *Helter Skelter* and *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*. Next year, we're producing five in the first six months.'

There's also the possibility of a 16-bit *Emlyn Hughes International Soccer*, following its Spectrum and Amstrad CPC conversions.

Audiogenic will continue to release BBC software, said Calver, but they'll be converted from other formats rather than vice versa. 'Writing software on the BBC and converting to the C64 is a joke. We tried that with *Psycastria* [in early 1987] and it bombed.'

Other projects include home educational software which Calver describes as 'the computer equivalent of teach-yourself books', probably on the Supersoft label.

Audiogenic are also recruiting a new team to help them into the big league. Game-design, graphics and sound specialists are sought for the Harrow-based firm, though most code work will be done by freelances.

■ As we went to press, Audiogenic announced a £50,000 charity tie-up with Barnardo's, which works with handicapped and troubled children. Anyone sending Audiogenic a donation to Barnardo's will receive a free game in return – for C64, Spectrum, BBC or Electron.

£50,000 worth of software is being given away altogether. Send cheques or postal orders made payable to Barnardo's, plus 42p in postage stamps, to: Barnardo's Offer, *Winchester House, Canning Road, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 7SO.*



Audiogenic's Calver (left, with Emlyn Hughes): now looking for a lady sponsor

What's in a name, part I: Smartass software house Thalamus have dragged up a new word for 'conversion' – the next incarnation of C64 hit *Sanxion* is dubbed *Sanxion The Spectrum Remix*.

As fast-rising **clichés** go, this could rank alongside 'leisure software' (games to you and us), 'productivity packages' (applications) or even the magnificent 'standalone system' (um, just name your computer . . .).

What's in a name, part II: Taking a lead from the resounding, nay tongue-rolling, success of *Mad Mix The Pepsi/US Gold Computer Challenge Series Game As Featured On A Lot Of Very Big Screens At The PC Show*, Gremlin Graphics have hopped into bed with the manufacturers of Chewits sweets.

Gremlin's *T-Wrecks* has been renamed *The Muncher*, in a touching tribute to the **tooth-rotters'** TV commercial character, and the game will be mentioned on 8.5 million packs of Chewits.

Cheap Mandarins: Games from Mandarin Software are likely to dribble onto budget . . . eventually. Reports say they're included in a **new deal** between Database, Mandarin's owners, and budget house-that-roared Alternative Software (which also publishes budget Summit and full-price Again Again labels).

Still, we reckon that 4,096-colour Amiga *Pioneer Plague* won't have a **chance** against Code Masters Spectrum simulators . . .

Our type of people: The US Gold empire is striking back in the great *Katakis* affair. In September, their game of that name was withdrawn after legal rumblings from *R-Type* producers Activision, who claimed it was a **rip-off**.

Now US Gold are looking at a 'rewritten' *Katakis* from the German-based Rainbow Arts programmers – and insisting that the new title (*Denaris*) will be thoroughly **law-abiding** while just as fab, brill, playable etc.

Thumbs down: US-based ST software firm The Moving Finger Company are closing their British office in Southampton, but will still be doing transatlantic business.

The firm published *The Moving Finger* newsletter for **very serious** ST users (they had to be serious at £30 for six issues), and released application titles including *ProCopy* and *Third Clip*.

Anyway, that new address in full: Proco Products, *PO Box 665, Chepachet, Rhode Island 02814, USA.* ☎ (from UK) 010 1 401 568-8459 – and don't forget they're five hours **behind Britain**.

Printer costs to rise after EEC ruling

Printer prices could soon suffer a sharp increase, following an EEC decision aimed at cheap Japanese imports.

Under the new rules, Epson, NEC, Citizen, Brother, Seikosha and Fujitsu printers – among others – will have to be made up to 47% more expensive (different figures apply to different firms).

The move came after European manufacturers complained that the success of cheap Japanese models was undercutting their own business. For instance, some 80% of all dot-matrix printers sold in Britain are Japanese.

Now, the EEC reckon, increased prices will even out the price difference between Japanese and European firms and help sales of the home-grown machines.

Printers manufactured within the EEC by Japanese companies are exempt from the new price rule. However, most will still be more costly than the made-in-Japan models have been: this summer, for instance, several such firms including Citizen had to up prices by about 10%. That's because manufacturing in Europe is more expensive.

■ European and American companies will not have to raise their prices. These include Amstrad, Mannesman Tally, Olivetti and Tandy.

Buying a printer: Back Bytes

What's VAT?

For nine-and-a-half years, a grim spectre has been stalking micro users . . . 15% value-added tax (VAT).

Everything you buy in the corner computer shop, except books and magazines, has a whopping 15% tax added to its price.

The VAT charge is normally included in advertised prices for software, though not always for hardware – which is why something 'priced' at £299.99 can really cost you closer to £350. And that's usually only mentioned in the small print.

But at TGM we've decided that people have been misled by manufacturers for too long, so from now on *all* prices we mention in the magazine include VAT.

■ If you run a business, you probably know already that by registering with Customs and Excise you can claim back the 15% VAT on anything you buy for your work – which might include your micro. Contact the local Customs and Excise office listed in the phone book.

New MSX please, we're British . . .

by Robin Hogg

As new consoles and computers appear all round, there's now an improved MSX – the MSX 2+ – though no UK launch date has yet been set.

The machine comes in three models from Panasonic, Sanyo and MSX leaders Sony. It has a Yamaha FM sound chip, a palette of 19,268 colours (more than four times the state-of-the-art Amiga's) and a 514x424 screen resolution. However, the central processor is an 8-bit Zilog Z80, à la Spectrum.

According to a spokesman for the Konami Software Club, which deals with MSX games, the graphics are 'impossible in their use to distinguish from normal TV. We're not talking PC Engine, Sharp 68000 [a £1,500 Japanese machine] or Amiga graphics, we're talking *real life*.'

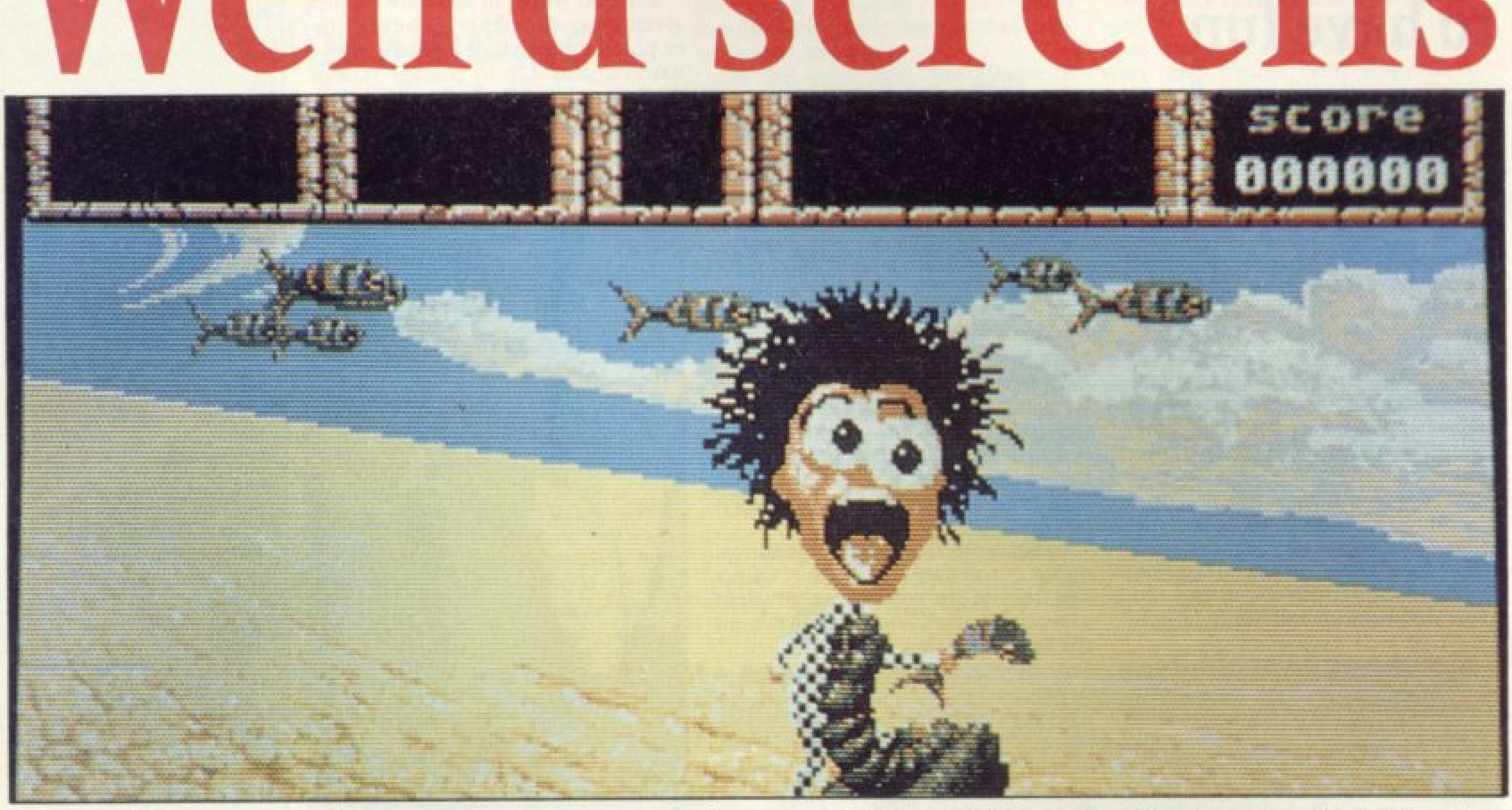
High praise or high hype? Japanese software companies seem to believe the former – they're already taking it to heart with upgraded conversions of existing games and some original titles.

Software for the MSX 2+ includes a 3-D *F-1 Spirit* from Konami, and *Super Laydock II* featuring supersmooth scrolling.

In Japan, the system is around £300, with disk-based games at about £20 each.

Never before have so many sprites looked so good for so long . . .

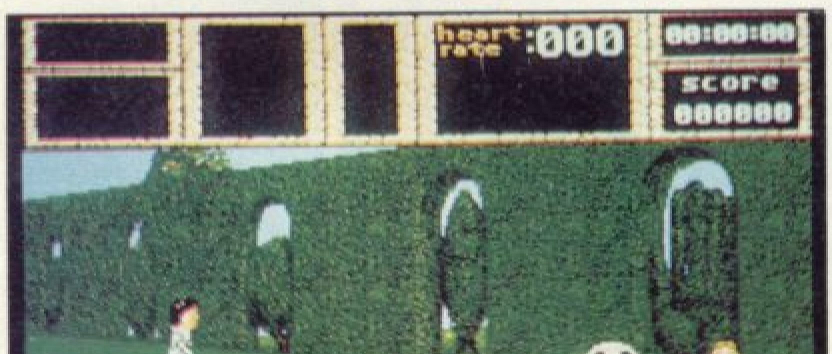
Weird screens

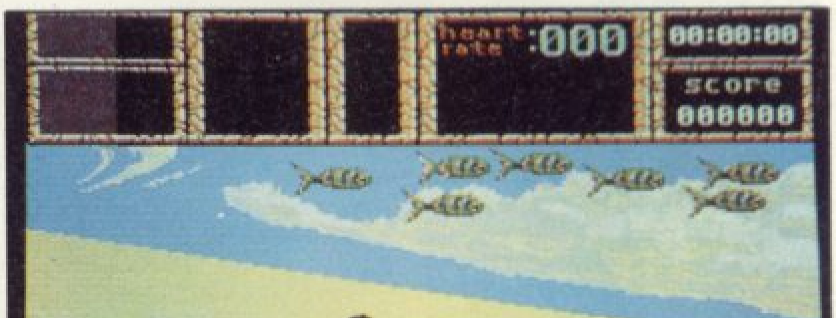


Um, it's different: Weird Dreams is a game made for screenshots – vivid, warped landscapes depicting the nightmare world of the gameplay.

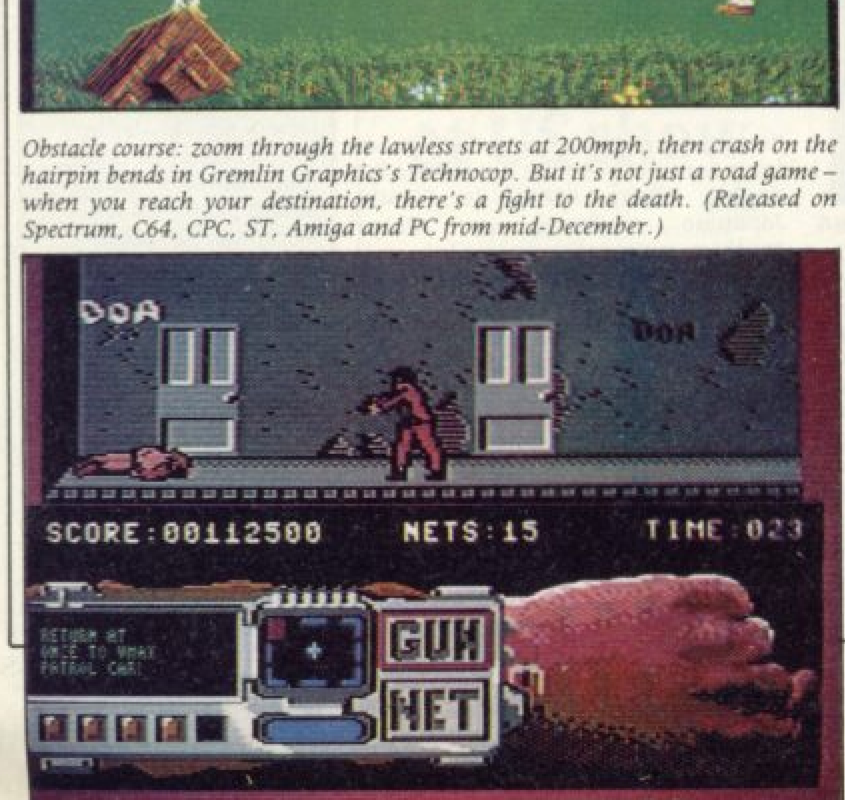
The story's simple enough: in hospital, in a coma, you slip into the strange land of the subconscious. Struggling to get back to the 'real' world, you encounter everything you wished you'd never thought of.

It's a puzzle-solving challenge, with a setting which makes Alice In Wonderland seem realistic. (ST screens; also available on Amiga, PC and C64.)

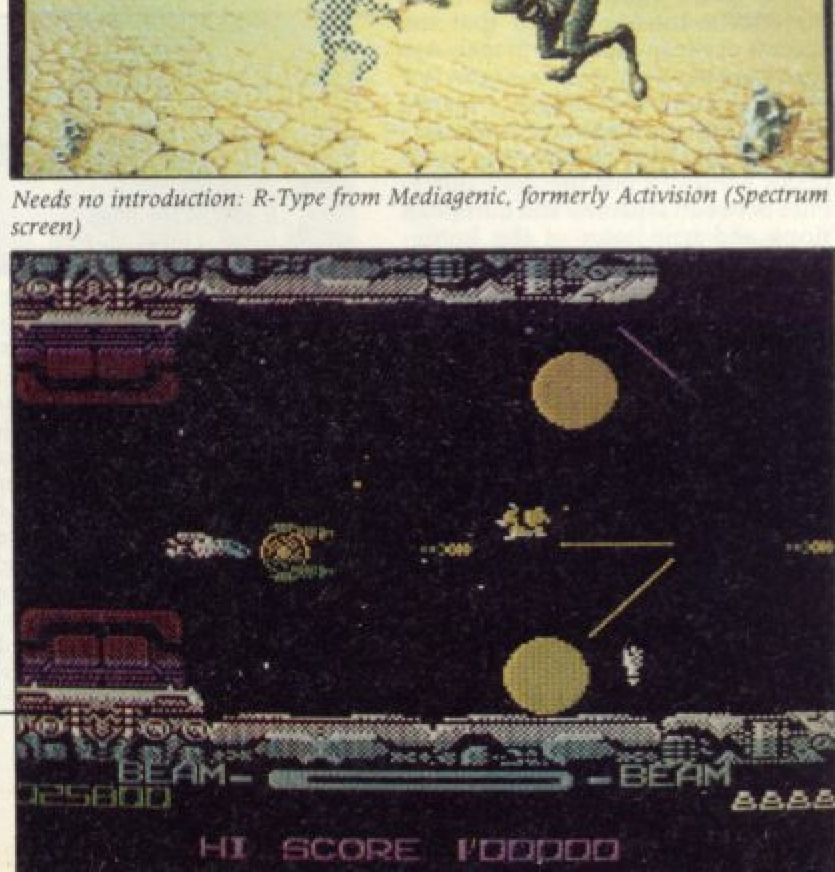




Obstacle course: zoom through the lawless streets at 200mph, then crash on the hairpin bends in Gremlin Graphics's Technocop. But it's not just a road game – when you reach your destination, there's a fight to the death. (Released on Spectrum, C64, CPC, ST, Amiga and PC from mid-December.)



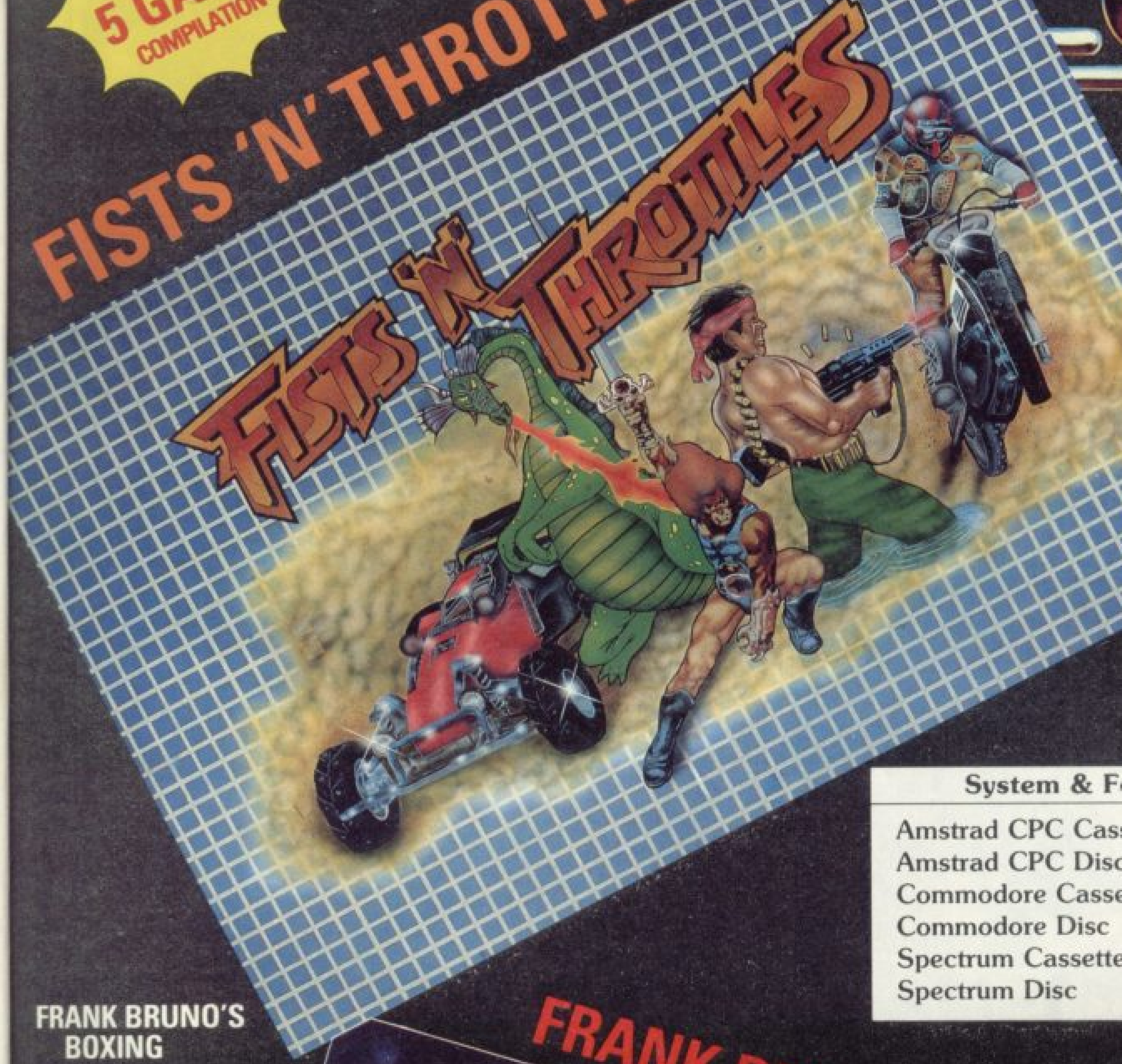
Needs no introduction: R-Type from Mediagenic, formerly Activision (Spectrum screen)



elite

2x CASSETTE
5 GAME
COMPILATION

FISTS 'N' THROTTLES



BUGGY BOY
DRAGONS LAIR
THUNDERCATS
IKARI WARRIORS
ENDURO RACER

System & Format	RRP (£ UK)
Amstrad CPC Cassette	12.99
Amstrad CPC Disc	14.99
Commodore Cassette	12.99
Commodore Disc	14.99
Spectrum Cassette	12.99
Spectrum Disc	14.99

FRANK BRUNO'S BIG BOX



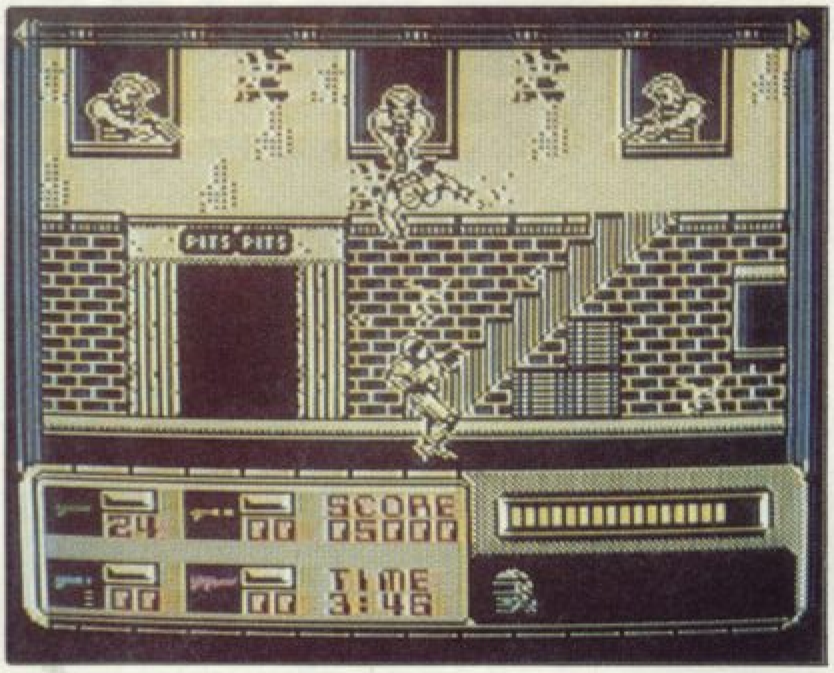
FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING
BATTY
COMMANDO
BOMBJACK
SCOOBY DOO
BATTLESHIPS
SABOTEUR
1942
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS
AIRWOLF

2x CASSETTE
10 GAME
COMPILATION

System & Format	RRP (£ UK)
Spectrum Cassette	12.99
Spectrum Disc	17.99
Commodore Cassette	12.99
Commodore Disc	14.99
Amstrad CPC Cassette	12.99
Amstrad CPC Disc	17.99

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Eastern Avenue, Lichfield WS13 6RX,
England. Telex: 336130 ELITE G.
Consumer Hot Line: (0543) 414885

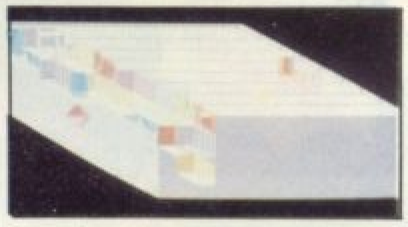
PRESS ANY KEY



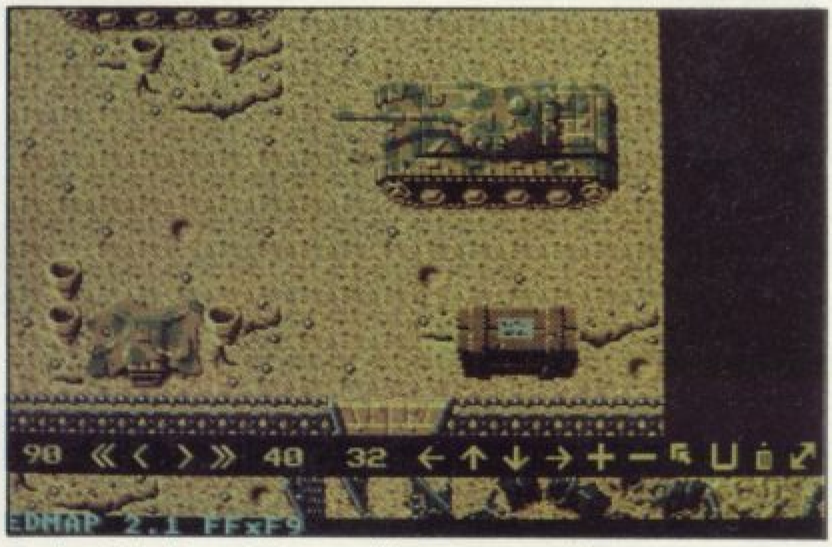
We can rebuild him: RoboCop from Ocean (Spectrum screen, also on C64)



Classic on 16-bit: Elite's Paperboy (ST screen, Amiga release also)



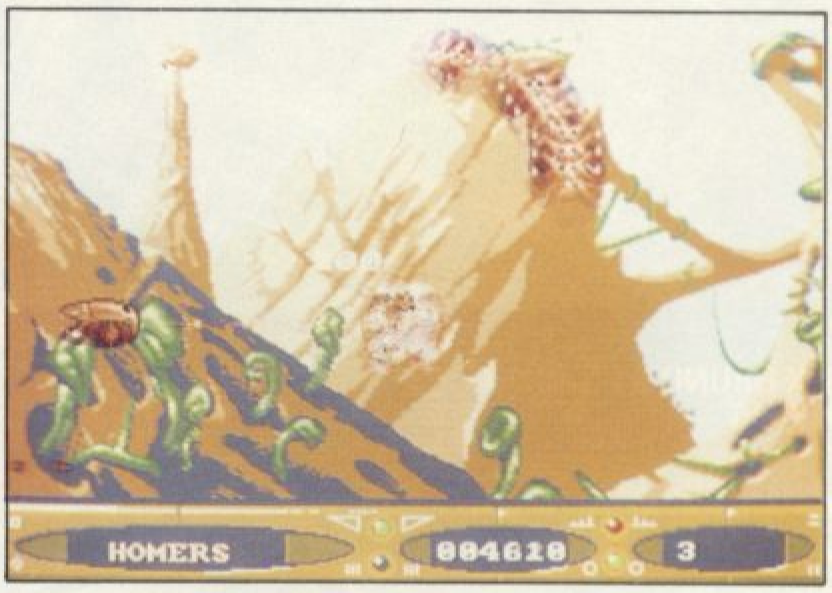
Get a bearing on that ball in CRL's abstract puzzle Transputer (ST screen)



Rambo – 16th bit, part III (or something): Ocean's Rambo III (ST screen)

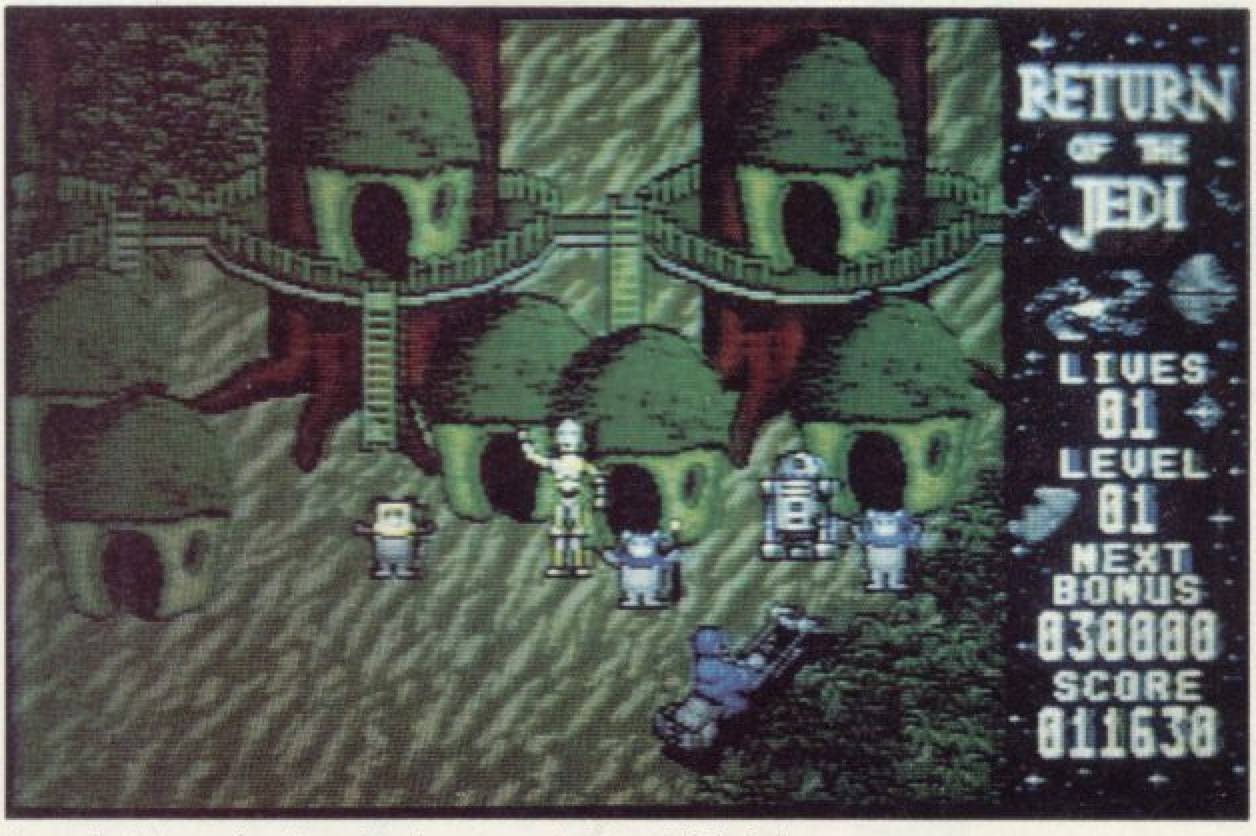


In the beginning there was Exolon . . . and now comes Stormlord, from programmer/publisher duo Raffaele Cecco and Hewson (Spectrum screen; CPC and C64 also expected in January; Amiga and ST later)



Ghost returns: Martech seem to have sneaked off centre stage for a while, but they're back with Phantom Fighter (Amiga screens)





Yet another ST screen from Domark's coin-op conversion Return Of The Jedi

'1989 quality': that's what they're claiming for Prospector In The Mazes Of Xor, Logotron's 16-bit version of the successful 8-bit Xor. Twice as many mazes, digitised soundtrack and a construction set . . . if that's 1989 quality, let's have it (Amiga screen).



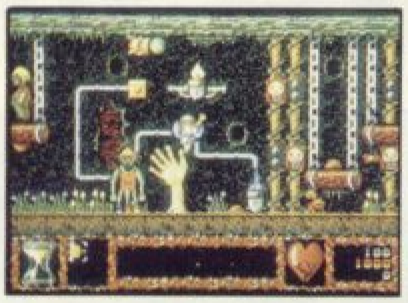


'Are you sure you're 18?': well, in the Middle Ages it didn't matter. Ironlord, from French software house Ubi Soft, tests skills in archery, arm-wrestling and swordfighting and claims to have 'the first ever 3-D combat simulation with a sword'. (ST screen; also available on Amiga, PC, Spectrum, CPC and C64.)



Something nasty in the wood: Rainbird's Verminator is set within an ancient oak tree, and you've been sent by the Tree Council to get rid of those pesky insects.

Sounds unlikely to us, but then it's a good excuse for more than 250 locations and a bit of bug-bashing. (ST screens; available on ST and Amiga from January.)

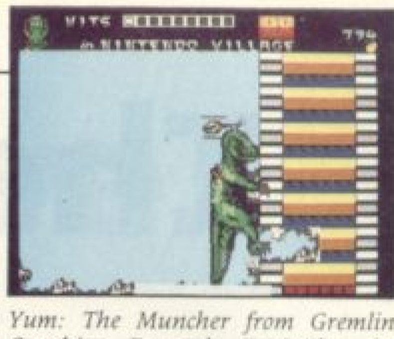




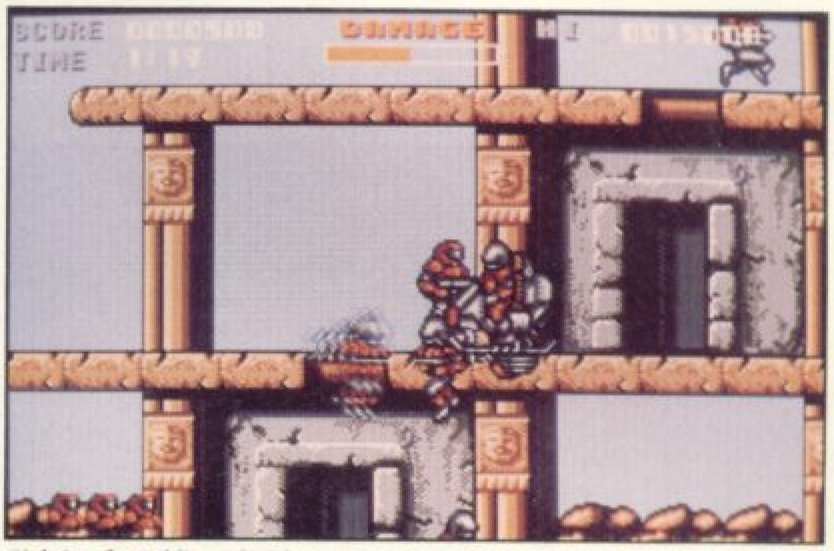
First for Code Masters: International Rugby Simulator is the famous budget house's 16-bit debut (ST screen)



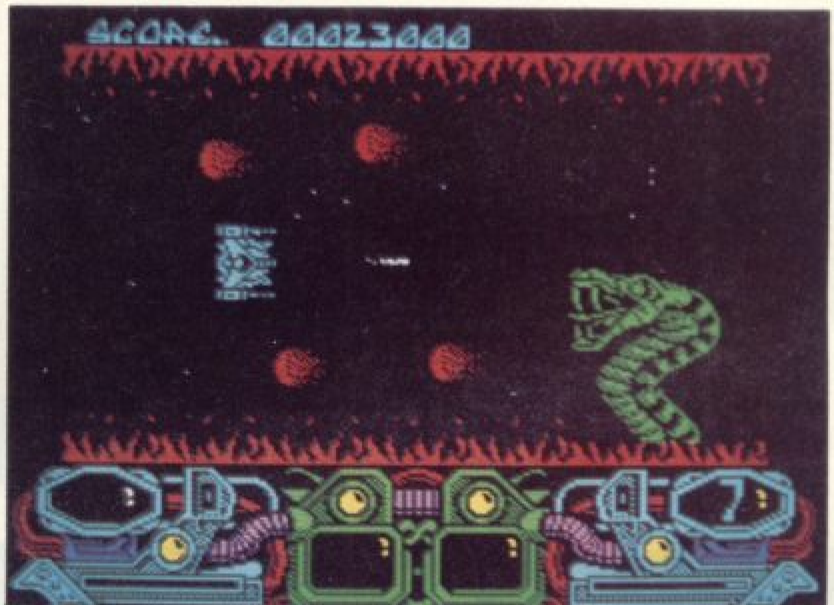
11-a-side: Gary Lineker's Hot Shot, from Gremlin Graphics



Yum: The Muncher from Gremlin Graphics. Formerly T-Wrecks, the game was retitled after a promotion tie-up with Chewits sweets (see TGM Report). (Spectrum screen.)



Fighting fit: Soldier Of Light on The Edge's sister label Ace (ST screen, also out November/December on Amiga and C64)



Space race: aliens poise for attack as the landscape scrolls two ways in Gremlin Graphics's Dark Fusion (Spectrum screen; C64, CPC release also, from early December)



Capcom conversion: yes, another from GO!. Tiger Road is an arcade-style kick-'em-up with extra added magic weapons and supposedly 'based on an ancient Chinese fable'. Fable schmable; just kick high (ST screen; also available on Amiga, Spectrum, CPC and C64).

The Atari 520STFM



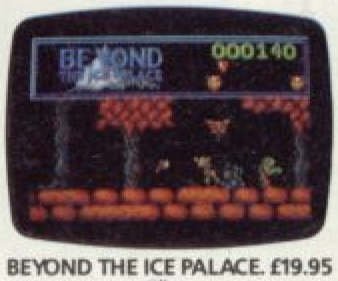
Of £450 wort



MARBLE MADNESS. £24.95
Electronic Arts.



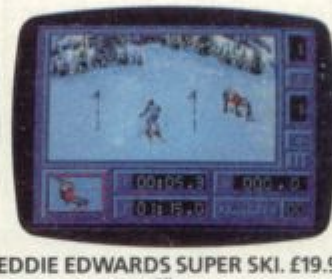
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BEYOND THE ICE PALACE. £19.95
Elite.



BUGGY BOY. £19.95
Elite.



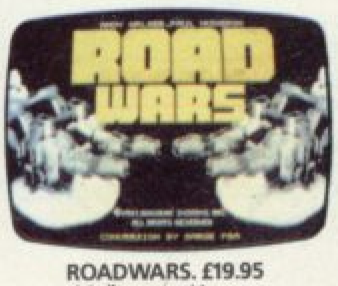
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Elite.



IKARI WA14.95



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ROADWARS. £19.95
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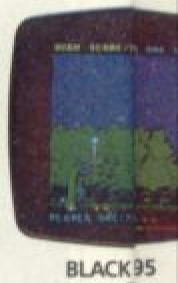
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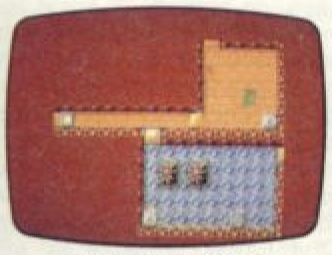
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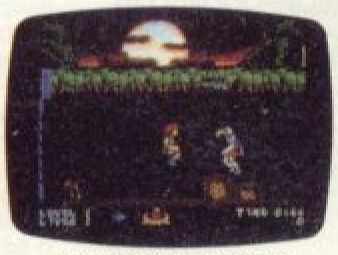
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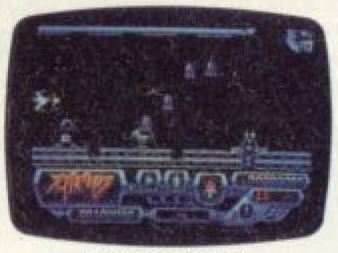
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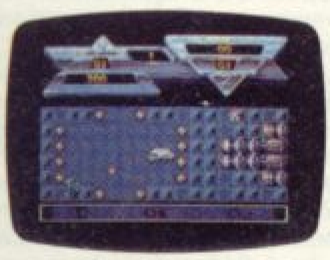
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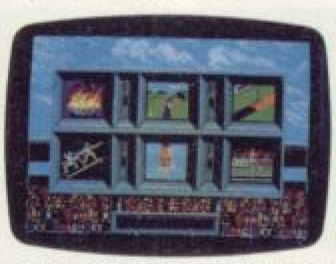
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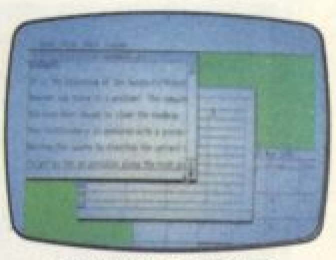
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ATARI
SUPER PACK

COMMODORE WONDERLAND

For Commodore owners, now is the winter of our disk content. Elsewhere in TGM you'll read about the goodies unveiled at London's Commodore Show – meanwhile, in the USA, dozens of software and hardware packages are appearing. And many of them are aimed at **Amiga artists**.

TGM's Marshal M Rosenthal, the Lewis Carroll of microcomputing, reports from Philadelphia.

The time: now. The place: the kitchen table. I'm sitting near the window as the morning light streams in. Without warning, a large white CPU chip goes running by, intoning 'I'm late, I'm late, I'm 7 megahertz late'. Dropping the spoon, I give chase.

The chip dashes out into the street and disappears down an open manhole. I dive after it – only to find myself falling down a dark tunnel. A glimpse of light begins to shine as my speed decreases. I bump bottom to find myself in a whole new world – the world of Commodore.

Before me stretches the mystical land of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Ahead is a vast space crammed with booths, all touting new and exciting products for the C64 and Amiga . . .

Seriously, now

ComicSetter, from Canadian software house Gold Disk, has attracted plenty of attention. The program is a real hoot – you can quickly create comic-book panels, import art and text, even make your own word balloons.

But you're no good at drawing? No problem, it comes with plenty of ready-to-go art. Additional packages of ready-to-use pix include *Funny Figures*, *Science Fiction* and *Super Heroes*.

Gold Disk were also showing the nearly finished version of *MovieSetter*. No complicated commands, just point and click. Plenty of colours, wipes, dissolves, panning effects, and sound to add along with music.

One feature that makes *MovieSetter* really stand out is that you can run up to two minutes of animation with just 1Mb RAM.

The software house also has another high-end tool; *Professional Draw*, the Amiga's first structured graphics program. High-quality art can now be created without the 'jaggies' and other problems associated with ordinary bitmapped graphics.

And there was even more news for Amiga artists at the Philadelphia show. Microillusions' *Photon Video: Cell Animator* not only lets you do pencil tests – it also synchronises sound with the animations you create,and works in all 40 graphics modes.

Electronic Arts's *Deluxe Photolab* combines three programs on one disk: a HAM painting program (you can even have screens of different resolutions overlapping each other!), a colour and graphic mode enhancement processor, and a poster-printing program that lets you go from $3m^2$ to postage-stamp size.

3-D vision

Haitex seem to be displaying blurred images. Fuzzy stuff, till you notice that they're *stereo* images.

"High-quality art can be created without the problems of bitmapped graphics"

A REAL GEM FOR THE C64

Most C64 users would give anything to make their computer as easy to use as an Amiga, which is why Berkeley Softworks developed *GEOS* version 2.0 – what it does is make the C64 a visual treat.

Boot up to display the *GEM*-like desktop environment, with its easy-to-use icons, pull-down menus and windows. Desk accessories give you access to handy utilities from within any application (my favourite is the alarm clock).

And a lot comes with the package, including *geoWrite* version 2.1, which mixes graphics and text on the same screen and has a mail-merge feature. Then there's *geoSpell* (a document spell-checker); *geoPaint* (16 colours in high-res with many tools); *diskTurbo* (to speed up *GEOS* functions); and *Text Grabber* (takes data from any Commodore word processor).

Of course, *GEOS* supports a variety of printers, disk drives and extra memory boards. It can't display other programs, but there's a new set of modules just released which includes filing systems, desktop publishing, chart-making, and spreadsheets.

The X-Specs 3D visor connects to a small interface box, which plugs into the Amiga's joystick port. High-speed liquid crystal shutters turn the sight of each eye 'on and off' 30 times every second; special software then appears in 3-D colour.

The disadvantage is a slight flicker, though fiddling with the monitor's brightness and contrast controls can help. Also included is a slide-show program, a 3-D conversion routine, and the exciting game *Space Spuds*.

In the future, software by other companies will be taking advantage of X-Specs's 3-D capabilities. And a C64 version (same hardware/different software) is coming.

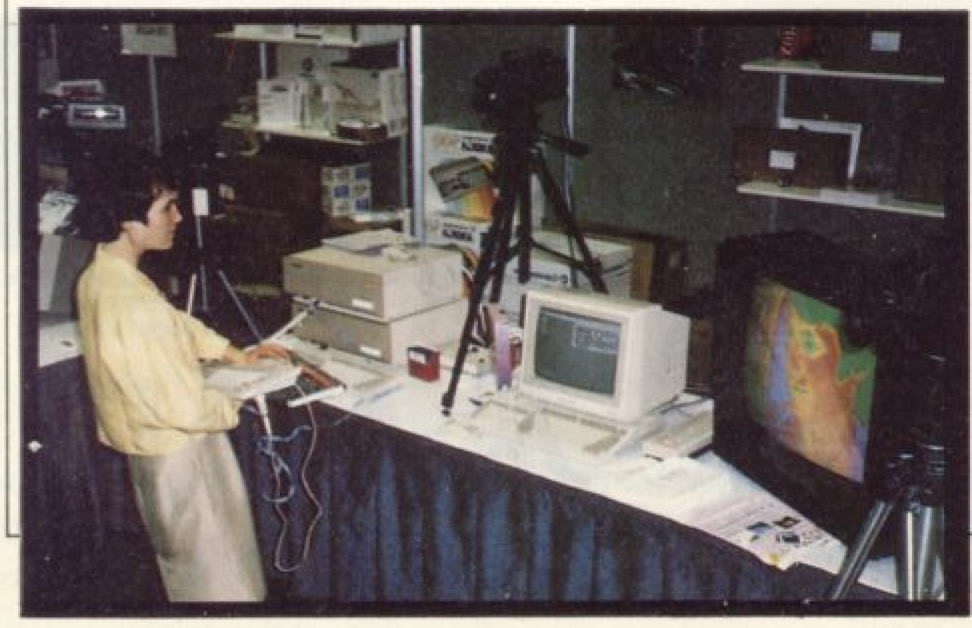
Digitised video

I see splashes of colour, swirls of light washing over a screen in another corner, as a face transforms crazily, like Dr Who giving up a life. And a mouse is rolling furiously back and forth, as A-Squared run their Amiga LIVE hardware system.

LIVE digitises from a video camera, with moving images received in black-and-white or colour (including the 4,096-colour HAM mode). Images can be altered, colours changed, mosaics created – all in real time.

There are different versions of LIVE for each Amiga model, and they do

For those special effects: A-Squared's Amiga LIVE system digitises video images and allows you to manipulate them in real time



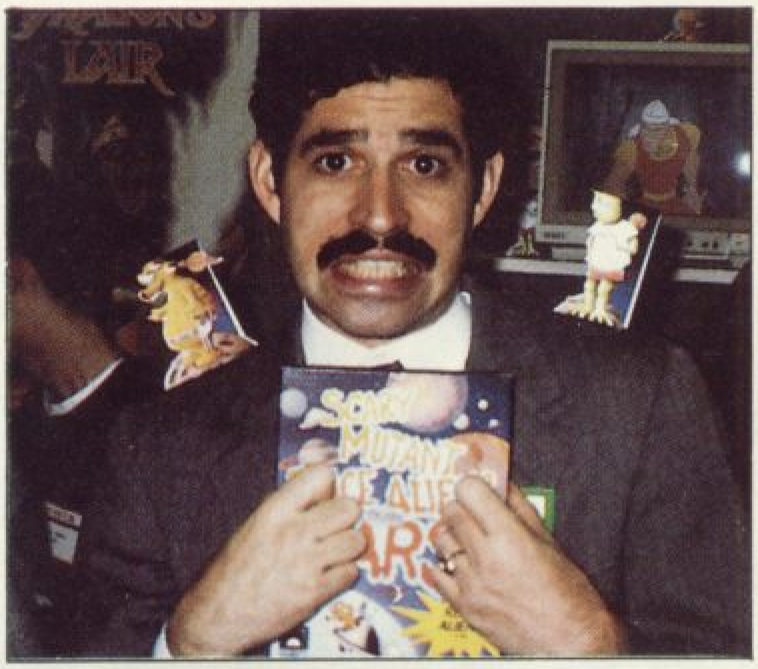
almost the same thing, but the LIVE 2000 card also offers mirror effects, titling, and multiple imaging on screen (besides having two video-in jacks).

Images can be processed, saved as IFF files, or turned into animation files.

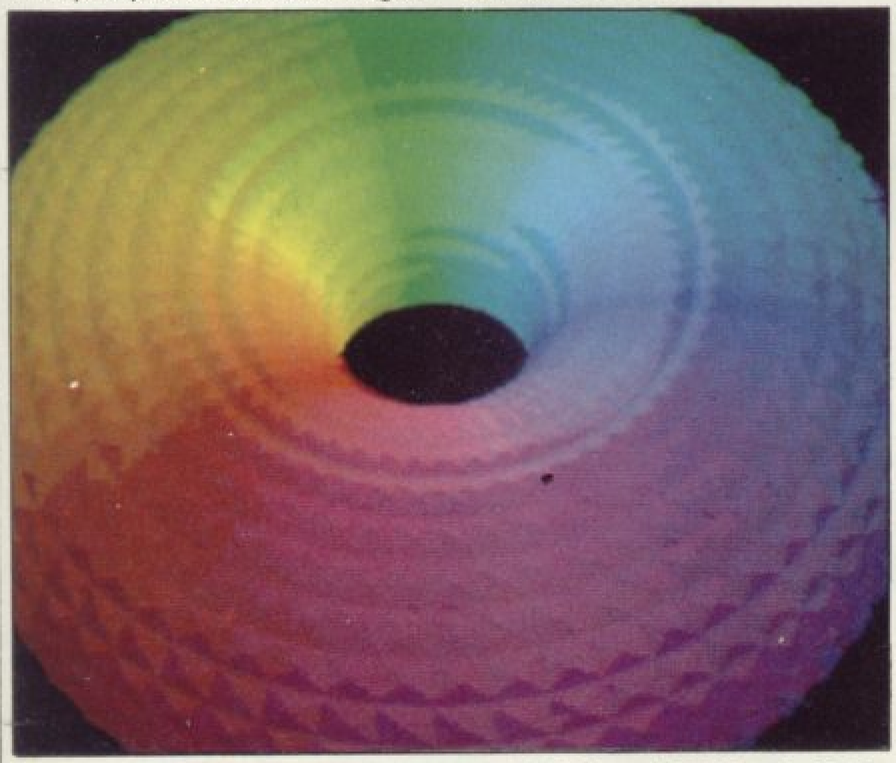
A new software add-on is *Invision* (Elan Design). This video-effects package gives you more power over whatever you're digitising, as each keystroke activates a different effect – from strobe to posterisation. This looks real neat when used in conjunction with a genlock (a device that merges live video on the screen with computer graphics), and taped out to a VCR.

Yet despite all these exciting graphics, there are still the same ho-hum monitors to display them on. But wait. It's a bird, it's a plane, it's the Viking 1!

Yup, the Viking 1 is the Superman of monitors. Check out these specs: 1008x800 pixels x 2 bits (grey scale). No interlacing flicker. A pure paper-white phosphor screen 50cm diagonally across. You can display two full pages of text and graphics on this baby, and there's no smearing or edge distortion of the image (it's running the pixel frequency at 72MHz, after all).



In the looking glass: TGM's American correspondent Marshal M Rosenthal



Moving pictures: get greater graphics control with Mindware's PAGErender 3D. *Features include a wireframe preview of every effect, to get an idea of what that object will look like rotated, or shrunk.*

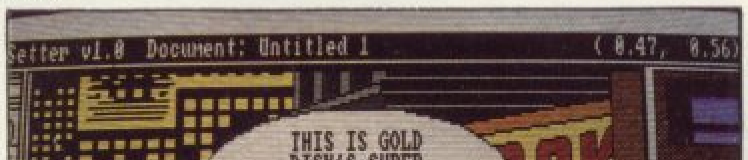
And besides such niceties as ray-tracing, adjustable dithering and light intensity, the program creates its own animation scripts as you work! You can even turn on a camera and record your actions for later playback.

DeluxeHelp

Still, all the hardware in the world can't help if the user's having trouble with the software. So that's where RGB's *DeluxeHelp* comes in.

Need help using Electronic Arts's *DeluxePaint II*? The module will take over the program and show you how to use the various painting functions. Interactive tutorials guide you through every aspect: colour cycling, perspective, brush manipulations. There's even the Mouse Talker (if you've enough memory), which comments on which buttons are needed for each function.

RGB also produce help programs for other packages including *Digipaint* (Newtek), *The Calligrapher* (Interactive), *Photon Paint* (Mediagenic, formerly Activision) and *Pagesetter*.



Zowie! Gold Disk's ComicSetter *lets you put hot air in balloons*

AMIGA MASS STORAGE

ReadySoft's Flashback backup system is pretty nifty. A box attaches to the composite video and serial ports, and records up to 100Mb of information on an ordinary video cassette (VHS or Betamax format).

When you need to recover the data, just run the software and reverse the operation.

But keep in mind that while the Amiga A1000 has a video-out port as standard, A500/A2000 users will need a composite-video peripheral.

And so to 8-bits

Peripherals for the Amiga abound, but you'd lose the bet if you thought that the C64 never gets any new hardware. So it's three steps right and four aisles over to Creative Micro Designs.

Their Jiffy DOS 64 is an enhanced disk operating system that really charges the old girl up. It's a five-minute operation to pop one chip into the motherboard of the C64, while another replaces the DOS ROM in any compatible disk drive (1541, 1571, etc).

Programs now load 15 times faster, and they save four times faster. No cables or cartridges means no memory loss, and Creative Micro Designs guarantee 95% compatibility with all programs, including those copy-protected.

The only thing you lose is cassette capability. But you get high speed and a set of powerful new DOS commands; C128 owners will be happy to know that a chipset is also available for them.

It's time to leave and return home. I grab one of the chips from the table, click my heels three times, and say 'There's no computers but Commodores, there's no computers but Commodores, there's no computers but Commodores, there's no computers but Commodores . . . '.

More for the Commodore: Back Bytes

ADDRESSES

Not all the Commodore products mentioned here are available in the UK. But here are the addresses of their North American producers, and prices converted into pounds sterling – bear in mind you'll probably have to pay extra for postage and packing.

- **ComicSetter, MovieSetter, Professional Draw** HB Marketing, *Brooklyn House, The Green, West Drayton, Middlesex UB7 7PQ.* ComicSetter is now available at £69.95, the other two are expected by the New Year (prices not fixed).
- **X-Specs 3D** Haitex Resources, *208 Carrollton Park, Suite 1207, Carrollton, Texas 75006, USA* Amiga version £74.
- **LIVE** A-Squared Distributions, *6114 La Salle Avenue, Suite 326, Oakland, California 94611, USA* A500 version £232, A1000 version £174, A2000 version £265.
- **Invision** Elan Design, *PO Box 31725, San Francisco, California 94131, USA* £76.
- **Viking 1 monitor** Moniterm, *5740 Green Circle Drive, Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343, USA* price not available.
- **DeluxeHelp** RGB Computer & Video Creations, *3944 Florida Blvd, Suite 102, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33410, USA* £35.
- **Jiffy DOS** Creative Micro Designs, *PO Box 789, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095, USA* C64 version £29, C128 version £35.
- **GEOS** Berkeley Softworks, *2150 Shattuck Avenue, Berkeley, California 94704, USA* £35.
- **PAGErender 3D** Mindware International, *110 Dunlop Street West, Box 22158, Barrie, Ontario, CANADA L4M 5R3* £94.
- **Flashback** ReadySoft, *PO Box 1222 Lewiston, New York 14092, USA* £58.

WHO DARES WINS WITH INFOGRAMES



● **WIN** an all-action weekend worth £300!

● **WIN** copies of Hostages, Action Service and Captain Blood!

Captain, blood!' said the raw recruit. 'Wassamatter,' snarled the gnarled (well, it rhymes) veteran, 'this is an action service.' Just then the trusty old Scots sergeant piped up in his inimitable lilt, pointing into the murky distance: 'Hostages! In fog . . . '

'Rams,' sighed the captain. 'Can't you recognise in fog rams when you see them?'

Okay, you've probably got the message by now that this comp is from **Infogrames** (in-fog-rams, get it?), the French software people who brought you *Captain Blood*, *Action Service* and *Hostages*, which received a high-rating 77% last issue.

And as for the terrible puns, well, if you've got a better idea, you 'orrible little man, perhaps you'd like to let us know while you run 40 miles in full combat gear?

In fact, that's probably just what you'll end up doing if you win the prize – a place on an **all-action Who Dares Wins weekend**. Held early next year near the SAS base in Herefordshire, the weekend features a fighting day out, two nights in a luxury hotel and two slap-up banquets.

After expert briefing from an ex-SAS man, you'll be airlifted to the battlefield by helicopter, together with another TGM prizewinner and one of our more bloodthirsty writers. Camoufl-aged, and issued with goggles and paint gun, you'll join a small team, receive final orders . . . and then you're on your own.

How to enlist

At the end of the Infogrames action day, you'll also receive a signed copy of *The SAS Survival Handbook*. But just to test your SAS skills beforehand, we've put together a few questions about Britain's toughest regiment (motto: Who Dares Wins) – and France's softest software house. Answer them all correctly, and you could be daring and winning.

Send your answers on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope to **WHO DARES WINS COMP, TGM,** ***PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***, to arrive by **January 15 1989**.

The first two correct entries drawn out of the rocket-launcher win a place on the Who Dares Wins weekend (we'll send you full details). Ten **runners-up** receive a copy of an Infogrames game (you can choose from *Hostages* or *Action Service* on ST, Amiga or PC, or *Captain Blood* on the 8-bits, so let us know which you'd prefer).

Usual rules as printed on the contents page apply.

QUESTIONS

- 1 The SAS's official headquarters is in Sloane Square, London. But in which county is the SAS depot located?
- 2 What do the initials SAS stand for?
- 3 Name one known SAS operation in the last five years.
- 4 Is the SAS part of the Army, Royal Navy or Royal Air Force?
- 5 Name one Infogrames game other than *Action Service*, *Hostages* and *Captain Blood*.




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THE GIFT OF THE GUPPIE

You've met them – people who pay three quid for a can of genuine London fog. People who fling Shake' n' Vac all over the floor just so they can hoover it up again. People who buy *The Great Space Race*. And people who order it on **tacky** telephones.

These are the Gullible Prats Piddling Income on Electronics – **guppies**. And if you know any, you need Mel Croucher's survey of useless electronic garbage.

● Radicam R-900 Wave Hunter ● £65 The Sharper Image
Calling all perverts. Here's a neat little one-kilogram computer-controlled cross between a camera and a Dalek, which you can radio-control from up to 100 metres.

It crawls round the floor at parties, looking up skirts and photographing groins through an adjustable camera turret. Field tests confirm that it has been specially designec to kick across the room (using your stiletto-shoe telephone, of course).



● Blabbermouth Talking Radio ● £23 Discoveries
Lip-synchs are *in* this year, and this little AM/FM radio has a bright red mouth that moves in time to the banal words and horrible music of the guppies' favourite audio pap.

It comes complete with a belt clip, so that extremely rude people can perform unnatural acts while jogging to *The Jimmy Young Show*.

● Maruzen Cordless Electric Stapler ● £39 The Sharper Image
This chunky wonder does everything a traditional hand-operated stapler can do, for only 20 times the price (plus batteries).

A must for all you guppies who've had your hands cut off for shoplifting and are fed up bruising your forehead when you try to head-butt the stapler for those important document presentations.



● Braun Voice Control Clock ● £25 The Sharper Image
Looks like an ordinary alarm clock, feels like an ordinary alarm clock, but the only way to shut it up is to yell '@#!* off!' at it.

And then guess what? It goes off four minutes later, until you shout at it one more time.

This happens a further nine ear-splitting times, with the alarm growing progressively louder. Orders are believed to be flocking in from members of the deceased fraternity wishing to be woken.



LOOK ■ SHARP?

The Sharper Image is a San Francisco-based emporium, publishing a monthly catalogue which claims over 20 million guppie readers. Each issue features a cheery welcome to shoppers from the firm's President, Richard Thalheimer, who wears awful jerseys.

Prices given for The Sharper Image's goods are approximate only – translations of the US costs.

If you really must have a fog-free bathroom mirror (£23), a sonic massager (£94), or a Sound Soother 2 (£58) which 'produces nature's most calming sounds' as an antidote to those pesky clocks, ring (from the UK) 010 1 415 344-4444.

● Microtech-2 Plus Electronic Flea Collar ● £25 The Sharper Image
Is your moggy crawling with blood-sucking vampire parasites? Is Rover thick with ticks, lice and leaping bugs? Then torture your pet to oblivion by strapping a high-frequency electronic scream to its suffering neck.

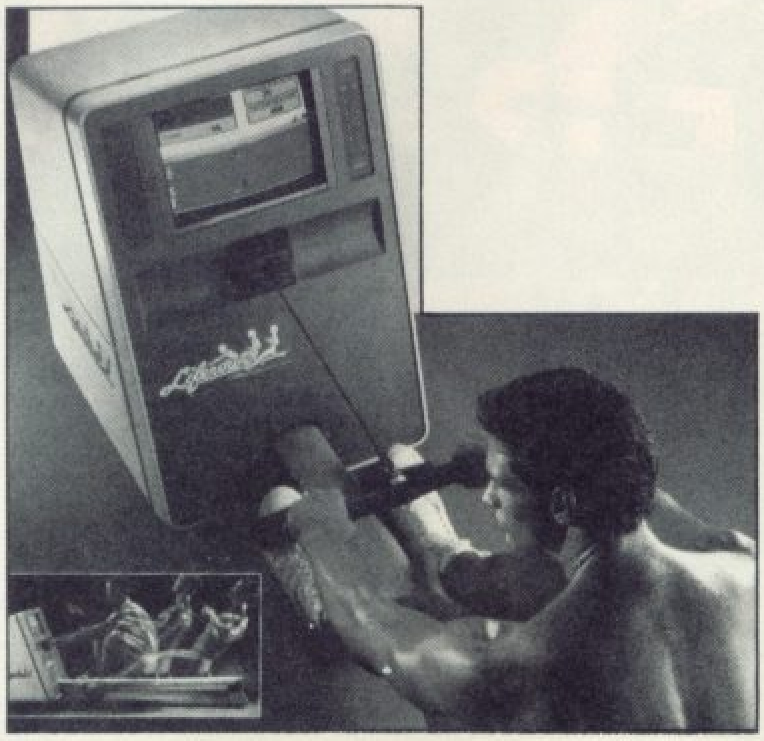
Does it drive fleas away? Well, even the manufacturers admit that it takes them two to three weeks to hop it. And then some of the little devils won't quit because they're deaf.

● Life Fitness Liferower Trainer • £1,600 The Sharper Image
After exhaustive research, TGM's 1988 Guppie Gift Award goes to this wonderful heap of computerised junk from the USA. It consists of the sort of rowing machine you can pick up for 50 quid, glued to a games console running a lump of software that would be overpriced at £1.99.

A voice chip barks erotic orders such as 'use your legs', and a pathetic canoe simulation flickers across the screen as you row your buttocks off, simultaneously improving your muscles and crucifying your eyes.

There are amusing possibilities of electrocution should the guppie lose control and vault headfirst through the monitor, and the video display is simply farcical – instead of a head-up race display, £1,600 buys you the sort of static horizontal view that went out with *Duck Shoot*.

Speaking of which, I've just thought of a use for the Quacky-IV Duck Phone. Pass the Kalishnikov, Olga.



● Plantronics Liteset Cordless• £135 The Sharper Image
Hey guppies, rush out and buy this one-ounce personal cordless phone, with a 300-metre range and a choice of six interchangeable earpads to 'assure a perfect fit'.

Earpad models include the Mouse Rectum, the Leprechaun, the Cauliflower and the Call The Doctor It's Disappeared Through The Wax Again.

● Quacky-IV Duck Phone• £55 The Sharper Image
Come on, admit it, you've always wanted to talk through a duck's arse, haven't you? This electronic marvel looks exactly like an Oregon mallard, except for the cable instead of a tail, the rubber pads instead of feet and the fact that its eyes light up.

As any genuine guppie would insist, it quacks and moves its beak instead of making a silly old-fashioned ringing noise.



● Fido Bulldog telephone • £70 The Sharper Image
A genuine dog and bone in the tackiest taste imaginable. Incoming calls are heralded by a merry synthetic barking, and Fido swivels his eyes as you approach.

You then pick up his revolting bone, shove it in your ear, and watch him lip-synch to the voice of your caller. He also speaks the time when he's not being a telephone.

You'll be pleased to hear that Fido can be humanely put down with a nine-pound hammer.

● Rainbow Trout Telephone• £43 The Sharper Image
As the footballers say – 'Real Madrid – 3. Surreal Madrid – fish.'

This phone is a must for surrealists, and comes complete with its very own cherrywood platter. It is impossible to parody the advertising for the Rainbow Trout Phone, so here's the blurb: 'Fishing is the most popular outdoor sport, talking on the telephone may be the most popular indoor activity. Now you can combine both great pastimes.'

● Sony Underwater Sports Phone• £135 The Sharper Image
Yes folks, the one we've all been waiting for, the world's first urethane elastomer cordless phone.

Just pop into the Jacuzzi, lie back in the bath, dive to the ocean bed or best of all go jump in the lake, dial up your chums on the Sony Sports Phone and wish them all a 'fblubblebobble blibble blub.'

● Mickey Mouse Telephone• £50 Discoveries
The very latest British Telecom-approved Mickeyphone features a communicator cunningly disguised as a blue plastic backpack. The unit is made from sturdy washable plastic, so it can be easily wiped down when the sight of it makes you vomit.

● High-Heeled Fashion Phone• £22 The Sharper Image
Calling all foot fetishists . . . this scarlet item of female footwear with a four-inch stiletto heel contains a push-button phone, with the mouthpiece conveniently located in the toe to provide the best smell.

For putting a sock in those ticklish situations, making sole-searching conversations and a host of other pongy puns, this product is appalling in its splendour.



NOT ■ SO ■ BAD

The British outfit Discoveries is the acceptable face of guppiedom – part of the mail-order group Quorum, which includes Reflections and Accent (for Midland Bank Access-holders).

Their catalogue is less hysterically high-tech than The Sharper Image's, with some products that might even be useful (like reclining armchairs).

Contact them at *McIntyre House, Canning Place, Liverpool X, L70 1AX* ☎ (051) 708-8883.

● Mitsubishi Visitel• £249 The Sharper Image
Okay, I admit it, I'd love one of these, and I hereby predict that video phones are going to be the guppies' next big thing! The damn machine actually works, sending still snapshots from caller to receiver in black and white, once every six seconds.

Digitised images are converted into sound pulses and squirted down the line (on the same principle as a fax machine), and the Visitel is compatible with all modular wall-jack systems.

Resolution is 96x96 pixels; the pictures are digitised into 32 shades of grey and displayed on a 4.5-inch monitor.

A 16mm lens is built into the unit, but a kit for wide-angle and close magnification can be added for about £20.

The only trouble with this little wonder is that I'd be talking to myself, 'cos nobody else I know has got one. So what's new?

RATTLE. ROLL IT . .



Amiga screen shots shown

ST screen shots shown

CADSENSATION OF THE YEAR'

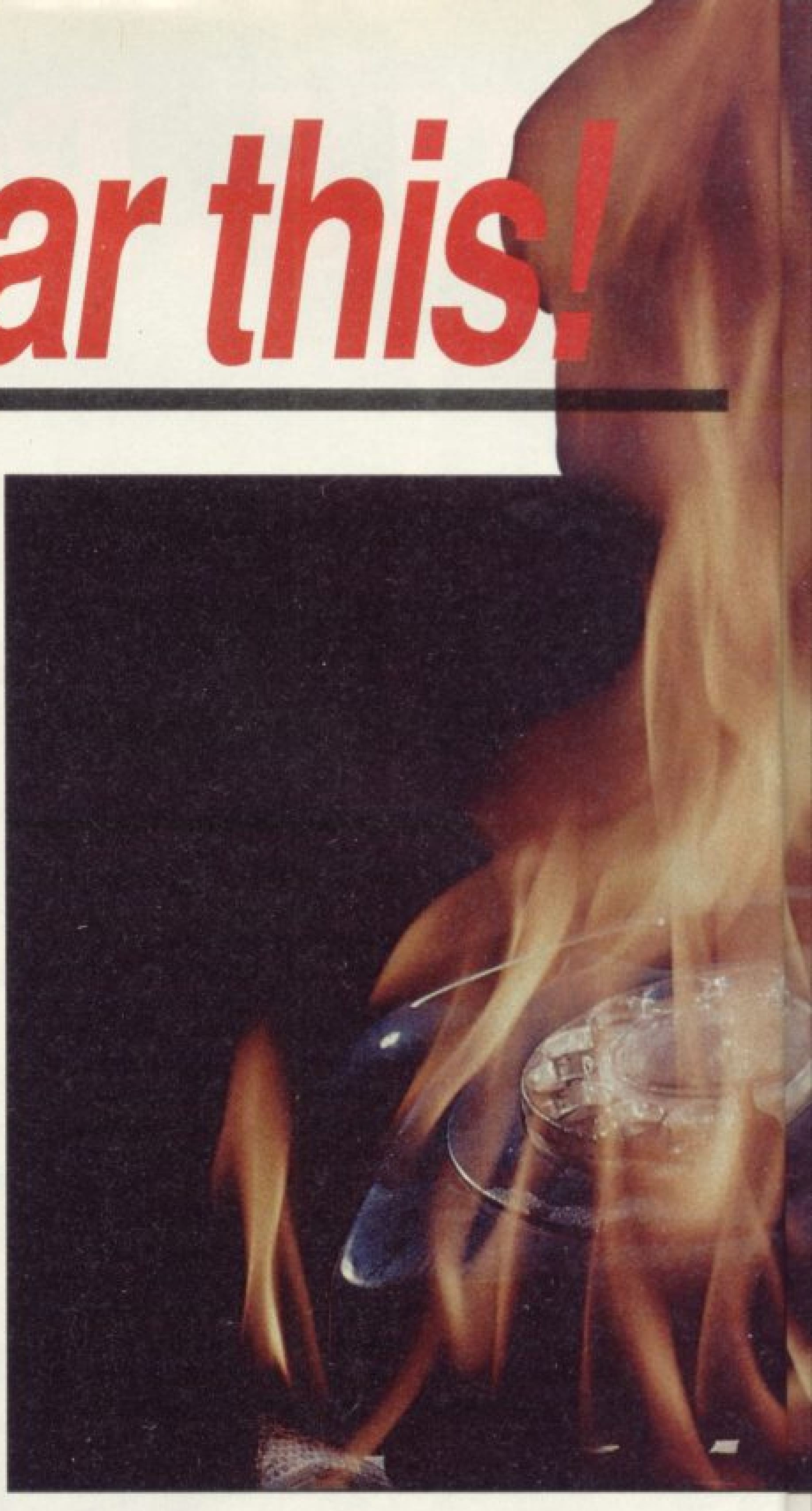
AFTERBURNER – You've played the arcade **smash** – now **experience** the white-knuckled **realism** of a supersonic **dogfight** at home! Using your heat-seeking **missiles** and laser anti-aircraft **fire,** can you be **top gun** against a seething supersonic **swarm?**

Experience brain-numbing **G-forces;** bones **rattling** with the body-jarring **pitch** and yaw . . . **scan** with your **radar, lock on** your target and **FIRE!**

(£12.99) Amstrad cassette (£9.99) and disk (£14.99), Atari ST (£24.99),

(£24.99) and MSX (£9.99).

Now hear this!



TGM gives you the Future on the telephone

The Games Machine, the magazine pioneering new entertainment technology, has brought you a host of exciting features over the past year. We were first with the full PC Engine story, the Sinclair PC 200, the Konix console and endless **exclusives** on the top games.

And we're going one step further — now we'll be bringing fact-filled information not only in the magazine but over the **telephone** too! As soon as you have read this you'll be able to pick up the phone and dial the special **TGM Hotline** number and get up-to-the-minute information and the chance to win a fabulous **Sega Master System Plus**!

Every month we'll be adding more and more to this unique service, but to kick-off we're providing you with the most relevant information for the Christmas/New Year buying season — **on sale dates**. We'll be listing when the **top games** are actually released, so no longer will you have to wait in anticipation — just pick up the phone, dial the Hotline number and we'll tell you what's coming out and when.

The System that keeps you informed

Printed below is the number for the first TGM Hotline message — and don't worry about the line being engaged as we have a 160 lines for incoming calls — and they are open 24-hours a day!

Ring this number now and listen for two minutes while TGM gives you a host of release dates for December and the questions for the very first TGM Hotline competition.

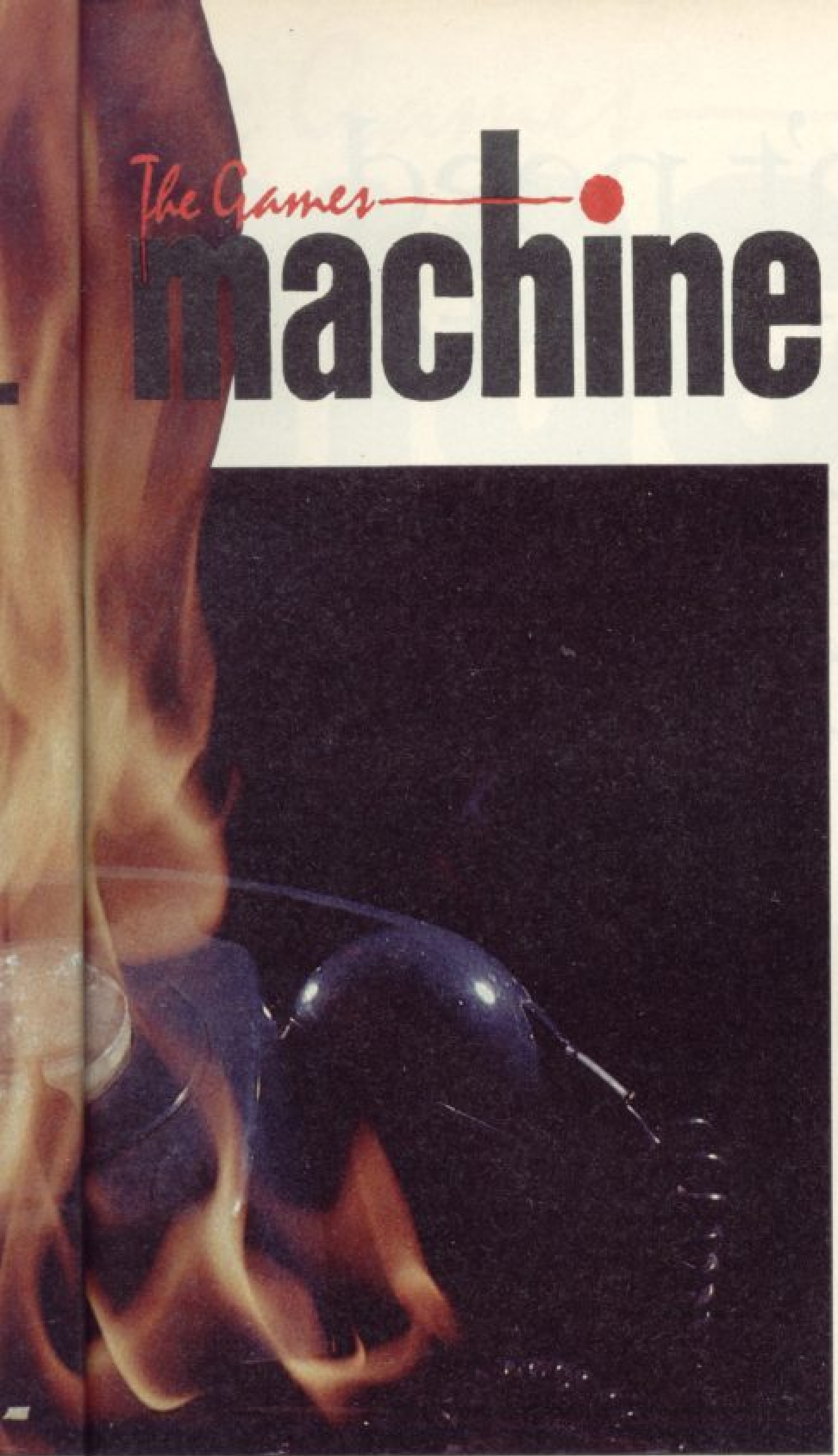
This number gives you the information all in one go — information which would take ages to accumulate otherwise.

Cheap at the price too! The phone call will only cost you 25p per minute when you call during off-peak time (Mon-Fri 6pm-8am, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays) or 38p per minute during standard and peak-time (8am -6pm Mon-Fri).

Don't hang about, listen to TGM, pick up your phone and dial this number now...

0898 ☎ 555080

The Games machine



- In the future the TGM Hotline service is bringing you: Up-to-the-minute information telling you what is happening and when in the software and hardware world!
- Exciting competitions giving you the chance to win a selection of amazing prizes!
- And if a game misses TGM's review deadline we'll be telling you exactly what we think of it on the Hotline — as soon as we've argued about a mark!
- Similarly any information which is left out, or misses deadline, will be brought to you down the telephone line!
- The TGM Hotline service is brought to you by TGM Magazines Ltd in conjunction with Chatterbox Ltd

WIN A SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

HOTLINE COMP

Sega Master System Plus & games and T-Shirts!!!



To launch the **TGM Hotline** we've joined forces with Sega Enterprises to bring you the very first TGM competition on the phone! When you dial the Hotline number, after the essential information, we'll ask you three questions and a tie-breaker.

The top prize up for grabs is a **Sega Master System Plus** — a bumper bundle of Sega goodies including: the Sega Master System console, a control pad, a light phaser and two cartridge-based games: **Hang-On** and **Safari Hunt**. And as it is Christmas Sega are additionally throwing in the latest release — **Double Dragon** — the all-time big bash-'em-up! Sega are providing ten runners-up with Sega T-Shirts too!

HOW TO ENTER

Dial the number and listen carefully to the three questions. Fill in your answers in the boxes provided below then complete the tie-breaking sentence given to you over the phone. When you have completed the questions, write your name and address, cut out the coupon and send it to: **SEGA HOTLINE COMP, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. All entries must reach us by January 10 1989 and, as always, please follow the competition rules as detailed in the masthead.

1

2

3

Complete the sentence given to you over the phone in no more than 20 words:

Name..

Address...

....

..................................**Postcode**........................

You don't need a computer to work out how good these offers are.



Buy this and get a free Gremlin game.



Buy this and get a free Kixx game.



Buy this and enter a free trip to New York competition.

It's no secret where you'll find the best offers on these compilations. Because now Boots are giving the game away.

To get yours, all you have to do is send in the form when you buy either Megagames or Giants.

Buy The In Crowd, on the other hand, and you could end up in New York.

A two week trip to the Big Apple is the prize you stand to win if you can answer five questions correctly.

But whatever you do, don't play a waiting game. Offers close on February 28th.

A better buy at Boots

THE COMPILATIONS ARE AVAILABLE ON AMSTRAD, COMMODORE AND SPECTRUM FORMATS. AT LARGER STORES ONLY. SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY. PRICES FROM £12.95 TO £17.99.

The Games machine

REVIEWS

TGM AWARDS

As announced last issue, the TGM team have constructed an award system for deserving games. They are designed to let you know, at a glance, which games to grab from the shelves first – and which ones should never have got there in the first place.

And to blow your brains completely, you'll find the reviews snappier and more concise, while still the most informative around.

As for the Awards themselves . . .

TGM TOP SCORE

Awarded to the highest scoring game of the month. If past issues are an indication, these games will be of the highest quality in all respects – playability, graphics, sound and depth. Games you've just got to have

The Games machine TOP SCORE

The Games machine STAR PLAYER

TGM STAR PLAYER

Often more than one per issue, these are not necessarily the next highest scoring games, but those that the TGM team found difficult to put away. Star Players may not excel in all areas, but will feature tremendous playability – just the sort of fun game to load up when friends are visiting.

The Games machine TRASH

TGM TRASH

This derogatory title will be used to label those games that should never have been released. Not intended to be a criticism of the software houses, it is designed to encourage game development and playtesting before software hits the shelves – we hope it doesn't appear too often.



60 ■ LAST NINJA 2

Privileged winner of our first ever TGM TOP SCORE, this martial arts spectacular follows on from the classic oriental arcade adventure, *The Last Ninja*. Taking place over six scenarios, the Ninja has been brought forward in time to deal with the evil Shogun – a powerful New York gangland leader. Mixing combat – both armed and unarmed – with object-based puzzles and featuring brilliant graphics, *Last Ninja 2* is a necessary purchase.

33 ■ RC PRO-AM

At last! A Nintendo game! *RC Pro-Am* has been programmed by Rare, the team who used to be associated with Ultimate (see TGM004). It involves racing remote-controlled cars around tortuously twisting tracks. Amid fierce competition, obstacles are avoided and objects collected to soup up your trusty vehicle in your battle to fill the mantelpiece.

59 ■ SHINOBI

TGM014's second STAR PLAYER fits in nicely with the martial arts cover theme. It features arcade-like sprites and takes place through five multi-stage missions. The hero, Joe Mushashi, moves along horizontally scrolling screens, killing various enemies in his quest to free child hostages. And wait till you confront the end-of-level foes.

PRESS ANY KEY

VERSION UPDATE

DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE

Ocean

Atari ST: £19.95

FOR his Olympic challenge, Daley has become big-headed and, not content with a gold medal, wants to break the world decathlon record. To achieve this you steer the computerised Thompson to 9000 points at the end of two days' events.

The traditional ten events are split into three types – running, throwing and jumping – but all have similar controls: joystick (or keys) waggled left and right to generate power, fire to determine elevation.

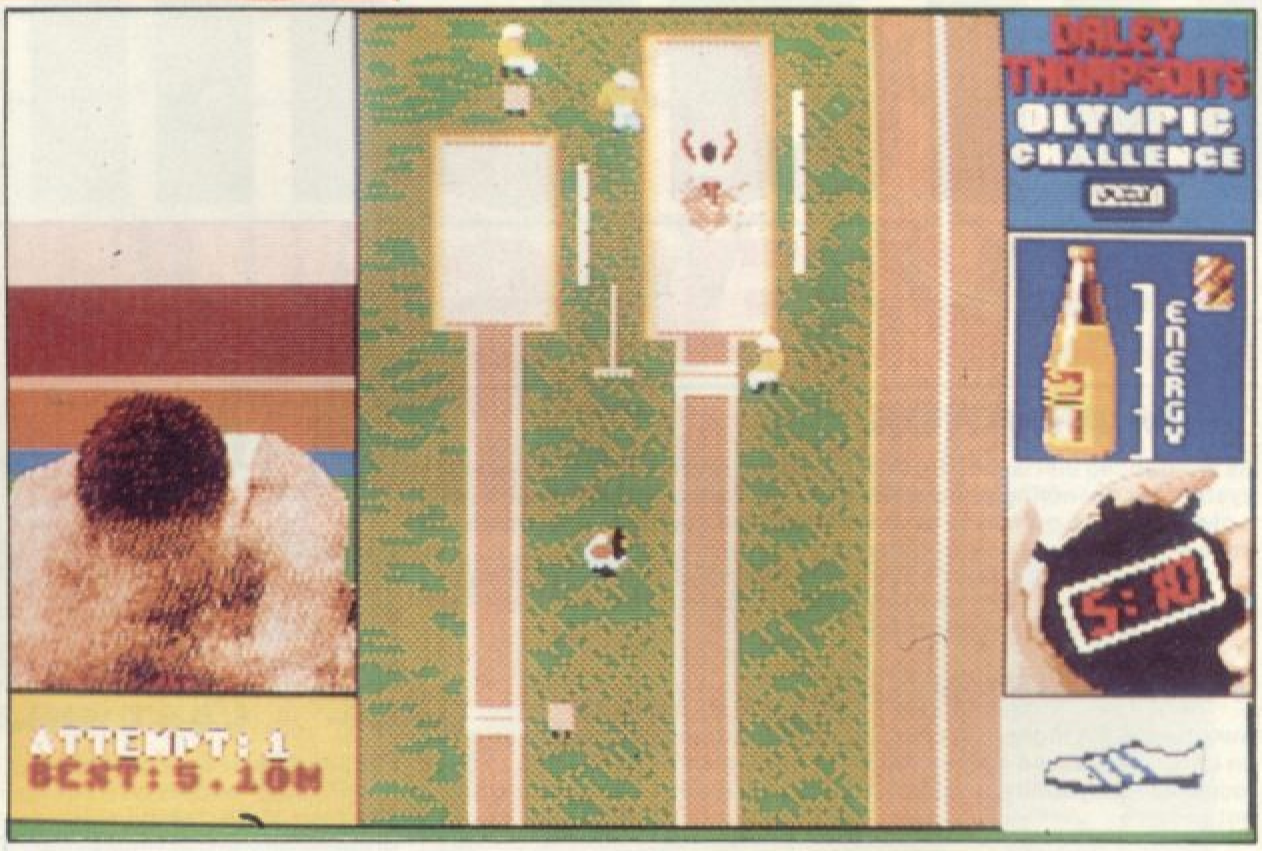
Predictably similar to the digitised Daleys and overhead views of the Amiga game, sound is the most obvious difference. Each event is loaded individually, yet sampled sonics have been ignored in favour of simple effects and irritating music.

The digitised pictures are undistorted (an improvement over the Amiga) but often feature crude checked shading. And some track views use very tiny sprites.

The mindless waggling is still a chore but the competitive spirit generated between friends makes *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge* worth a look.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 64%

COMMODORE 64/128: TGM013 73%
SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM013 72%
AMSTRAD CPC: TGM013 63%
AMIGA: TGM013 65%



Daley playing in the sand to relieve the tension of competition

VERSION UPDATE

Light relief

DARK SIDE

Incentive

PC: £19.95

SOME 200 years have passed since *Driller*, and the Kretars defeat. During this time they have constructed Zephyr One: the most powerful laser weapon ever built. Situated on the dark side of Evath's moon, Tricuspid, Zephyr One is slowing powering itself up from a network of Energy Collecting Devices (ECDs). When fully powered, it will launch the Kretars final assault causing Evath's destruction.

Your mission is to explore the 18 sectors of Tricuspid, destroy ECDs and reduce Zephyr One's power source. Only by destroying all the ECDs will Evath be saved.

Achieving your objective is no easy task as there are a whole host of puzzles to be solved as well as Tricuspid's defence system to contend with.

Dark Side is of the same high standard set by *Driller*. Once again the Freescape technique is shown off fully on the PC – it is much faster than its 8-bit counter parts and relies heavily on arcade skills as well as lateral thinking abilities.

CGA, EGA and Hercules graphics boards are all supported. As well as mouse/joystick control.

Once a few problems have been solved *Dark Side* becomes increasingly difficult to put away. An engrossing game which is a must for all PC owners.

PC: OVERALL 94%

AMSTRAD CPC: TGM008 93%
SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM008 93%
COMMODORE 64/128: TGM009 90

Said hey, babe, talk a walk on the dark side. Do, da-do, da-do, do do-do . . .



The Games machine
STAR PLAYER

A REMOTE CHANCE OF WINNING

RC PRO-AM
Nintendo

Back in issue 4, TGM visited **Rare LTD** to look at their past, present and future. Heavily into Nintendo for some years now, **Rare** haven't lost any of their brilliance or innovation. Their long-awaited (not least in the TGM office) program, *RC Pro-Am*, at last roars on to Nintendo's starting grid.

Even in the world of remote-controlled car racing the stakes are high, and there are top-prize trophies to be won.

Viewed from above, cars race round the multi-directional scrolling track in a fight to the finish. Anything goes in the struggle against three mean computer-controlled cars.

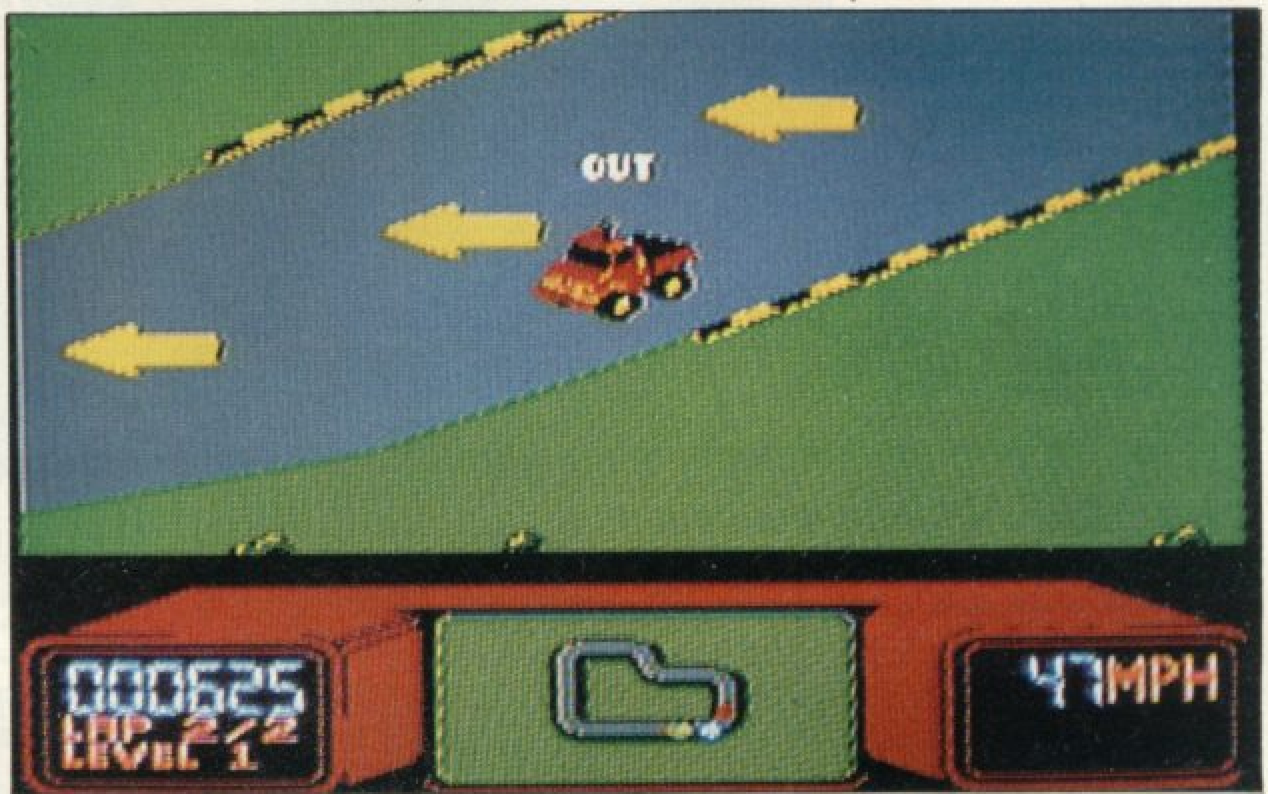
Each track has its own layout with items to pick up and use in your effort to win. And despite the seemingly passive nature of the game, this is one big push and shove match. Missiles are picked up and fired at cars in front of you, bombs collected are best launched at opposition as they come up behind and the roll cage is useful for ramming fellow racers off the road – there's no time for niceties.

Puddle trouble

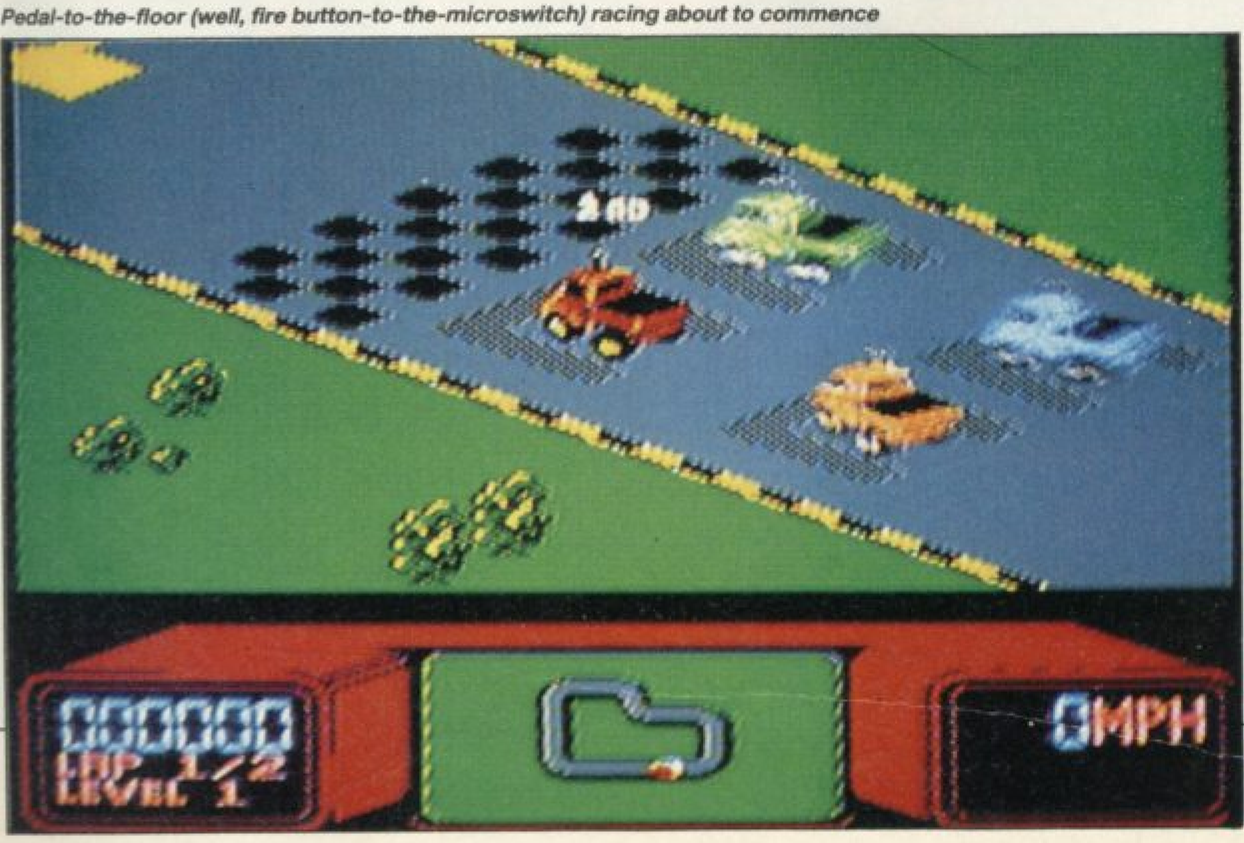
As well as other cars there are puddles, showers of rain, slippery oil slicks, random pop-up barriers and skulls to watch out for. Coming last is greeted with the game over message - sufficient incentive to play to win.

To help make sure it doesn't all go the computer's way, your car can be customised with super tyres, turbo power and a hot new engine for extra thrust. These extras become necessary as track conditions worsen the further you progress.

Scattered around each track are letters that make up the word NINTENDO. When all are collected, you upgrade to a better car. The truck is the beginner's car but it needs upgrading to a four-wheeler and eventually an off-roader should you wish to stay in the race against increasingly fast opposition.



Playable remote control racing thrills from post-Ultimate, Rare

Pedal-to-the-floor (well, fire button-to-the-microswitch) racing about to commence


Nintendo
Cartridge: £29.95

Technically superb, *RC Pro-Am* features overwhelming playability. Its excellent graphics, profusion of enjoyable tunes and professional presentation even put it head and shoulders above other Nintendo games. Scrolling is as smooth as anything yet seen on a console and the fun derived from racing cute cars is unbeatable.

OVERALL 85%

"Extras become necessary as track conditions worsen the further you progress"

PRESS ANY KEY

PRE-HYSTERICS

CAVEMAN UGH-LYMPICS
Electronic Arts/Dynamix

The violent visual jokes of Electronic Arts' *Battle Chess* (TGM**012**) are continued here in Dynamix's unusual prehistoric interpretation of simulated sports. It follows the standard theme of ambitious athletes competing in a prestigious sporting event. The difference is that the competitors are cavemen and the six events feature primitive pursuits.

The animated title sequence has a familiar looking, but out-of-place torch-bearer running to music of equal similarity to that of a certain *Games* series. He lights the Olympic flame just before a huge rock bearing the words 'Caveman Ughlympics' falls and crushes him to the ground! A hairy caveman then cavorts around the screen to the now deliberately strange and off-key music, finally a nearby volcano erupts, enveloping the bizarre scene in smoke.

The character selection screen follows, displaying animated faces of six cavemen – allowing up to six players to take part. A club is used to hit the desired character over the head and a profile given on them. Crudla, Glunk, Thag and Ugha are all particularly proficient at two events, while Gronk is good at everything – youthful Vincent isn't particularly good at anything.

Each caveman character is distinguishable by the well-defined, humorously-animated selection screen, and the profile gives a sense of identity to them. The character's sponsor – your name – is entered before the games commence.

The options screen allows you to view the Caves of Fame (the equivalent of world records), practise events, reselect characters, and begin play.

The first event is the Mate Toss, where your caveman drags his partner on-screen and, grasping her by the ankles, spins her 'round his head! Anticlockwise joystick rotation powers this movement before the fire button sends your partner flying gracelessly through the air.

In the Dino Race, the screen is split in half for a one-on-one contest between players jockeying biped saurians. The creature is spurred on – literally – and must jump boulders which litter the track. 'Turbo' speed is gained by clubbing the dinosaur's head, but if used too frequently, the creature with the 'brain of a dried pea' becomes confused and paces up and down aimlessly.

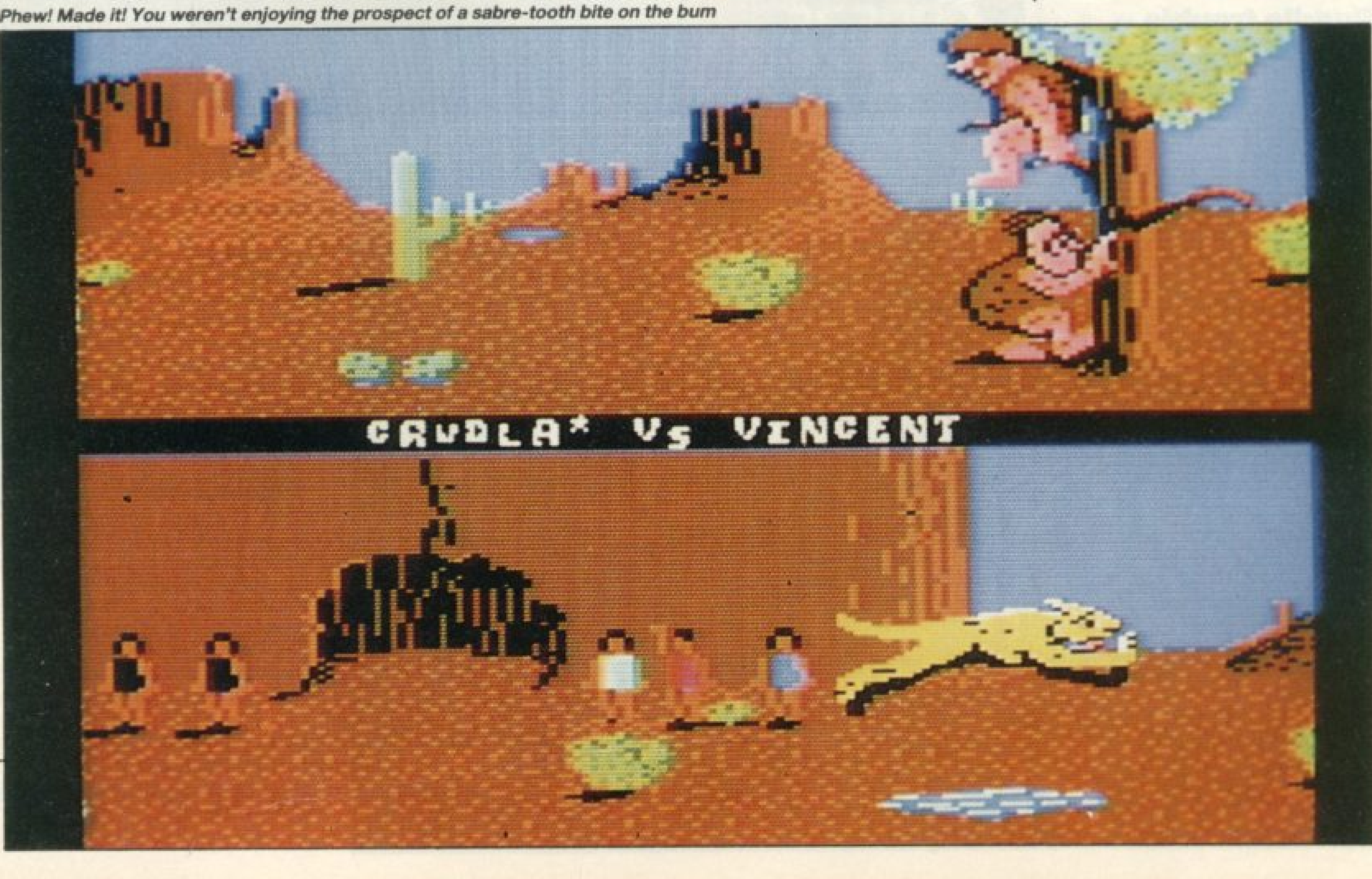
Burning ambitions
Players sit side-by-side for the tricky art of Fire Making, performed by rubbing two sticks together. When sparks fall on the tinder, blowing develops smoke, and with luck, flame. Opponents progress can be hindered by judicious use of a club.

The ubiquitous blunt instrument gets its own event in the form of Clubbing (which disappointingly doesn't involve drinking copious



Someone's going to have an awfully bad headache in the morning . . . just like modern day clubbing

Phew! Made it! You weren't enjoying the prospect of a sabre-tooth bite on the bum



amounts of alcohol, making a pratt of yourself on the dancefloor and going for a curry). Two cavemen stand atop a towering platform and attempt to either beat the energy out of their opponent or force them over the edge.

In the Saber Race, two caveman run and jump along a course while being pursued by a feline carnivore – displayed in the lower section of a horizontally-split screen. A tree marks the end of the course and safety from the hungry tiger.

The relatively safe height-bar of the pole vault is exchanged for the mouth of a hungry beast in the Dino Vault. First, the dinosaur's neck length is adjusted with the help of a burly trainer, then the caveman runs toward the launch point, brandishing a bamboo pole. If timed correctly, the pole will fling him over the dinosaurs head. If not, he will at best lose his loin cloth and take an early bath. At worst . . .

The bloodthirsty and violent sequences of the events are portrayed in an imaginative, comic style. They add smiles to the friendly' competition, and improve events which already use more varied control systems than most sport simulators.

Caveman Ugh-lympics' only problem is its lack of events; if Dynamix had included more, an excellent product would be on offer.



Higher! Higher! Lower! – Adjusting the jaw height in the Dino Vault



A club on the worried Crudla's head is about to select your character

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

The colourful graphics are sometimes indistinct and have few animation frames, but the cavemen's lively, over-the-top antics are fun to watch as well as control. From the Games series mickey-take of the introduction to the punch-up on the medals podium, quirky sound effects match the unusual and original sporting fun.

OVERALL 83%

OTHER FORMATS

No club-brandished conversions are planned – Ugh!

"The bloodthirsty and violent sequences of the events are portrayed in an imaginative, comic style."

VERSION UPDATE

AIRBORNE RANGER
MicroProse

Spectrum 48/128: Cassette £9.95, Diskette: £14.95
PC: £24.95

MEMBER of the Denton Design team, John Gibson, and programmer of classic Imagine games such as *Zzoom* and *Stonkers*, returns to the fray with the Spectrum conversion of *Airborne Ranger*.

The ranger is a member of an elite American unit who is parachuted into enemy territory on any of 12 dangerous missions. The objectives of which lie to the north of the drop-point, several vertical-scrolling screens away.

Using trenches and terrain for cover, the ranger crawls, walks and runs through the enemy base to reach his target. LAW rockets, grenades, a rifle and a knife are to hand for dealing with enemy soldiers, machine gun nests and minefields.

Once at the objective, perform the relevant task (mainly involving destruction of a strategic enemy target) and get out via an Osprey aircraft pick-up.

Each mission has its own requirements for completion and a time limit, so keep moving!

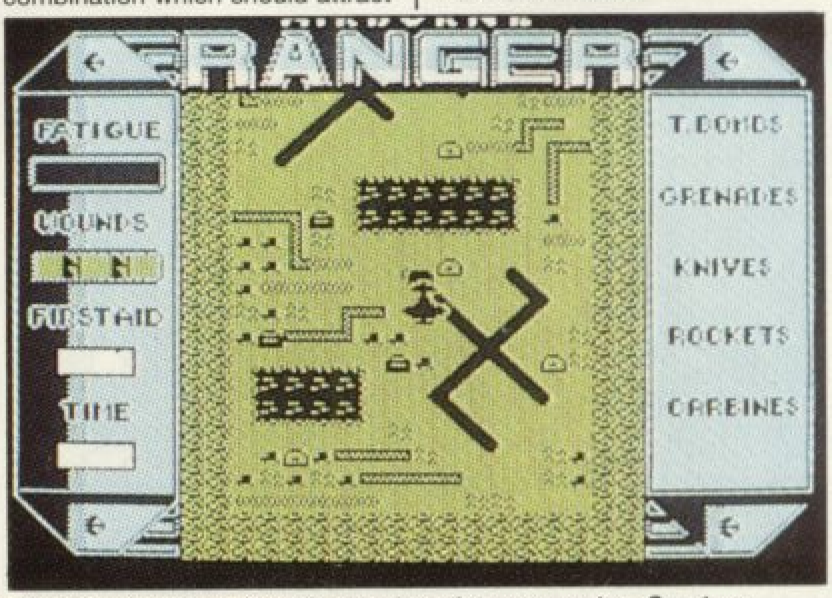
The Spectrum *Airborne Ranger* gets off to a poor start with each mission requiring a seperate load and featuring a narrow action-screen squashed between two status panels. Thankfully the scrolling is smooth and nearly everything found in the C64 original is present.

For the PC game, Microprose haven't neglected the potential of EGA. With 16 colours used in a military vein *Airborne* looks good. The heart of the game is in arcade-action with elements of strategy sprinkled on top. The extra screen where your backpack of weapons can be modified adds a little more strategic thought to the proceedings. But other than this it is essentially the C64 game in playability and presentation.

Airborne is a move away from the simulation side of MicroProse releases but is still a step above the normal *Rambo/Commando* style of shoot-'em-up. An effective combination which should attract those looking for a thought-provoking action game.

SPECTRUM 48/128:
OVERALL 73%
PC: OVERALL 78%

COMMODORE 64/128:
TGM003 82%



Choosing your descent with a plan view of enemy country – Spectrum

VERSION UPDATE

In a Pac'd program

PAC-MANIA
Grandslam

Commodore 64/128: Cassette £9.95, Diskette: £14.95
Spectrum 48/128: Cassette £9.95, Diskette £14.95
Atari ST: £19.95

THE RETURN of the yellow, munching beach ball was greeted warmly by TGM when the Amiga conversion of the *Pac-Mania* coin-op bounced into our office last month. Pac-Man, now in 3-D, explores four worlds which differ graphically as well as in layout. He leaps through the air to evade marauding ghosts, and can eat them when energised by a power pill.

The ST version would be more impressive if we had not seen *Pac-Mania* on the Amiga beforehand, nevertheless it is still a very good conversion. A little over half the screen width is used for the play area, the remainder for a status panel spread with colourful ghost stills. In-game graphics use few colours by comparision: 4 for the maze and 5 for characters, but all are nicely detailed.

The Spectrum's play area (two thirds of the screen width) is monochromatic, other than Pac himself, and scrolls smoothly but faster horizontally than vertically – this is disorientating and takes getting used to.

The C64 mazes look similar to the Spectrum when hi-res night graphics are chosen, otherwise day features are colourfully jolly (if blocky) as are the sprites.

The music is an adequate rendition of the coin-op sound track and is similar on ST and C64 – although thin Atari sound effects contrast to the arcade-like qualities of the C64. Sound on the Spectrum is crude, even by its own standards, consisting of brief clicks and jingles.

All conversions have been programmed to take advantage of the host computers' capabilities and provide addictive and accurate arcade thrills.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 89%
COMMODORE 64/128: OVERALL 87%
SPECTRUM 48/128: OVERALL 86%

AMIGA: TGM013 92%



A coin-op conversion worthy of anyone's ST, truly amazing

VERSION UPDATE

ARTURA
Gremlin

Commodore 64/128: Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99
Amstrad CPC: Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99

6 AD. Artura's task is to find treasures and unite the tribal forces of Albion (England) against invasion. Only Nimue can help, and she is held within the evil Morgause's fortress.

During your quest, scrolling platforms are negotiated and patrolling guards slaughtered with axes. Runes are collected to provide magick for your journey home.

It's difficult to say which of these two version is the worst, as they have equally poor sound, graphics and gameplay. Sprites on both versions are clear but consist only of two or three badly designed frames of animation.



A nice big red 'R' subtly denotes a rune in the C64 Artura



Careful with that weapon Artura, you might have an axe-ident

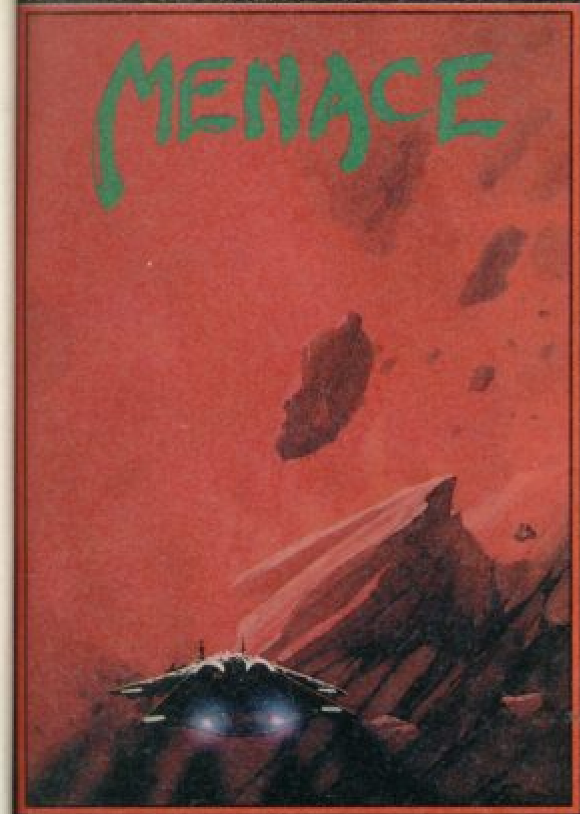
The Amstrad uses an ugly green, grey and pink colour scheme, while the bright sprite colours of the C64 are spoiled by bland grey backgrounds and plain green foliage. The rats and owls (or are they giant moths?!) of the C64 are mishapen, and seem to be a rushed job, as do the sledge-riding rats (!) of the Amstrad.

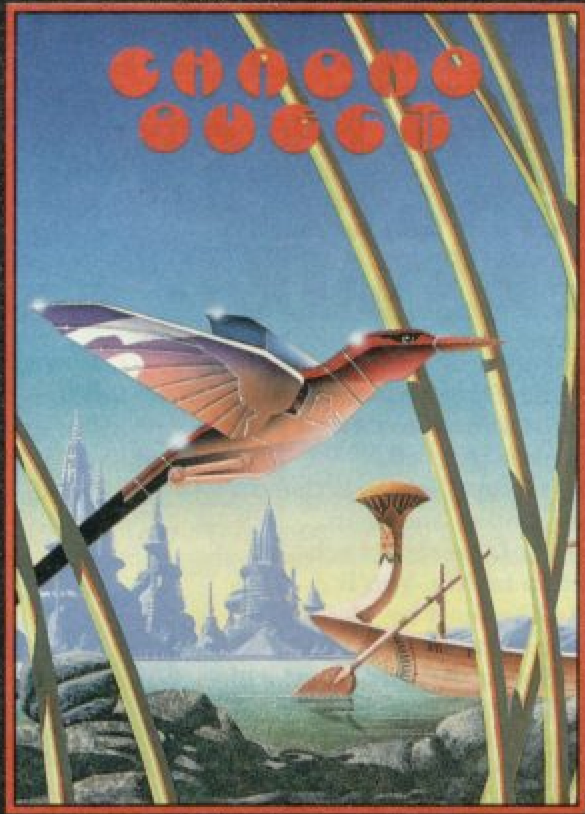
The grating title music which warbles away on the Amstrad is no better on the C64 – although it does have a reasonable dramatic in-game tune. Sound effects are sparse: bursts of noise on the Amstrad and inappropriate tones on the C64.

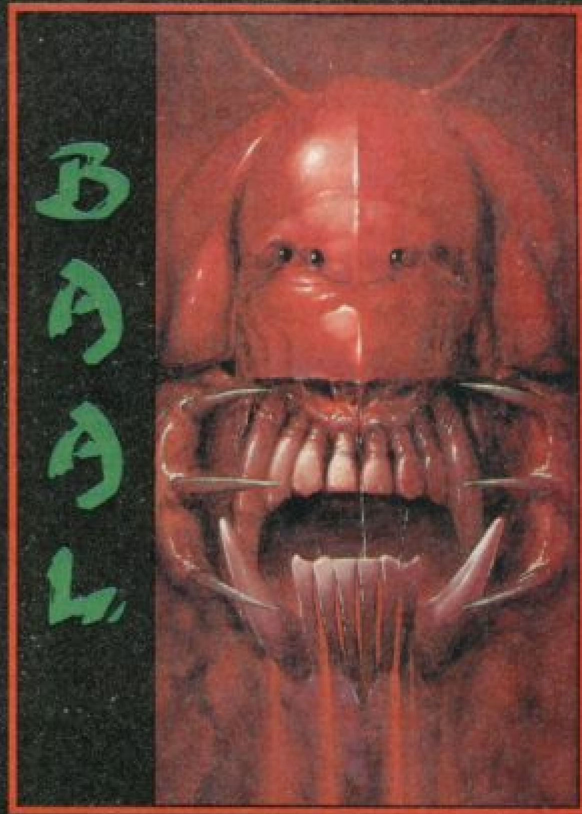
Hungry arcade-adventurers may be interested in this unimaginative and simply executed game.

COMMODORE 64/128: OVERALL 39%
AMSTRAD CPC: OVERALL 42%

ATARI ST: TGM013 48%
SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM013 42%













MENACE

This is a pure arcade game — a fast action packed journey through six very different worlds where lightning fast reflexes and furious fire button action are your only hope of survival.

Your mission orders are simple, you must destroy the planet Draconia. In theory possible, in practice . . .

The planet Draconia, an unnatural planet, has been formed over many centuries by six of the most feared rulers that have ever existed. These rulers, exiled from their home galaxy, have ravaged and plundered space, using the worlds they have destroyed and the life forms they have created to build this planet of fear and death.

Now an end must be put to their reign of terror. A large scale attack will prove too costly to our space fleets, Draconia has many orbiting defence systems, the sacrifice may be in thousands of lives. A single fighter craft, approaching undetected, may have a chance to avenge those who have perished, by destroying Draconia. You have that chance . . .

Screen Shots are from the Amiga version

AVAILABLE NOW ON THE PSYCLAPSE LABEL

CHRONO-QUEST

This is the first of a new generation of adventure games from Psygnosis. An adventure game in the classic sense.

Your quest begins in your fathers chateau circa 1920, there you find (or should find) your fathers latest invention; a fantastic time machine. Your father is dead, murdered, you are the prime suspect. A letter left by your father leads you to think the real culprit was Richard, his not so faithful servant. But he has escaped to the future using the time machine . . . who will believe your fantastic story . . . do you believe it?

You will be presented with many objectives; ultimately you will have to travel through time to collect the fragments of magnetic card to drive the Time Machine into the future. There you will have to . . . Meanwhile, the immediate objective is to find the time machine . . . Sorry, a more immediate objective is to find the room with the time machine in it. But its dark . . . Very sorry, an even more immediate objective is to be able to see where you are going . . . 3 hours and 250 minutes and even more immediate objectives later, you are standing in the hallway thinking . . . hellpppp!!!!

Screen Shots from the Atari ST version

AVAILABLE NOW ON THE PSYGNOSIS LABEL

BAAL

- ★ An addictive mixture of strategy and arcade action featuring:
- ★ 8 way ultra-smooth scrolling through 3 distinctive domains containing multiple levels.
- ★ Over 250 highly detailed screens, superb graphics and sound effects.
- ★ More than 100 monsters and 400 traps.

The future of the world lies in the hands of an elite squadron of men. YOU are the leader of the Time Warriors. Can you save the earth from the evil BAAL?

His army of undead have stolen an awesome weapon of destruction, a War Machine.

As leader of the ultimate battle fighters, your quest is to invade BAAL's domain, fighting off his monstrous demonic beasts to retrieve the War Machine . . . but . . . you must kill BAAL in the process.

Can you succeed? There is no option . . . the alternative is literally 'Hell on Earth'.

Screen Shots from the Atari ST version

AVAILABLE NOW ON THE PSYCLAPSE LABEL

PSYGNOSIS
FREEPOST
LIVERPOOL L3 3AB
UNITED KINGDOM
Tel: 051-207 0825

VISA

MENACE

Amiga/Atari ST	—	£19.95
C64/C128 Disk	—	£12.99
C64/C128 Cassette	—	£9.99

CHRONO-QUEST

Amiga/Atari ST	—	£29.95

BAAL

Amiga/Atari ST	—	£19.95

PSYGNOSIS


YOU'LL BE GRIPPING THE EDGE OF YOUR COMPUTER.. AS YOU ATTEMPT TO CONQUER
®EPYX'S.. FINAL ASSAULT
Take the challenge to conquer the perils of nature's unknown...you're at the foot of one of the world's highest mountains. Snow covered slopes, dangerous crevasses, sheer glaciers and a jagged rockface await you as you attempt one of the most gruelling sports ever created.
Pack your rucksack with climbing gear and food supplies, practise on the training slopes and then decide which of the six treacherous trails to tackle. You'll be tested to the limit by challenges in terrain, weather and your 'health'. Take note of the advice of your safety guide and never underestimate the challenge that lies ahead of you as you could fall thousands of feet or freeze to death in the sub zero temperatures.
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Amiga
Atari ST
IBM PC + compatibles
Spectrum 48/128K
CBM64/128
FINAL ASSAULT™
SCREENS FROM ATARI ST VERSION
U.S. GOLD
US GOLD LTD., Units 2/3, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX.
IS IT REAL ?.. OR IS IT.. EPYX

SPORT FOR ALL

SUPERSPORTS

Gremlin Graphics

With the Olympics now well and truly over, Gremlin provide an alternative to sprinting, jumping and throwing, in *Supersports*. The game consists of five events: crack shot, daredevil dive, slate smash, crossbow and an underwater assault course.

In crack shot you have one and a half minutes to shoot as many targets as possible. The shooting gallery is set in a back-street alley populated by cats. Targets appear from behind fences or windows and move across the screen, points are awarded for each successful hit. But don't get trigger happy; shooting cats deducts points from your score and your gun needs reloading after every sixth shot.

Daredevil diving involves hurling yourself off breath-taking heights performing mid-air acrobatics and landing in a bowl of water. The faint hearted dive from a measly 40ft while the more fearless jump from anything up to 400ft. The higher you are the windier it gets – skill is needed to remain on course. Mid-air moves are performed using a combination of fire and direction. Should you be blown off course, direction alone corrects your dive.

The third event, slate smash, takes only a minute to complete. During this time you smash as many plates as possible by any means available. They appear either side of you and are broken using a combination of kicks and punches. This is an easy event to play but it takes practise to accumulate a high score.

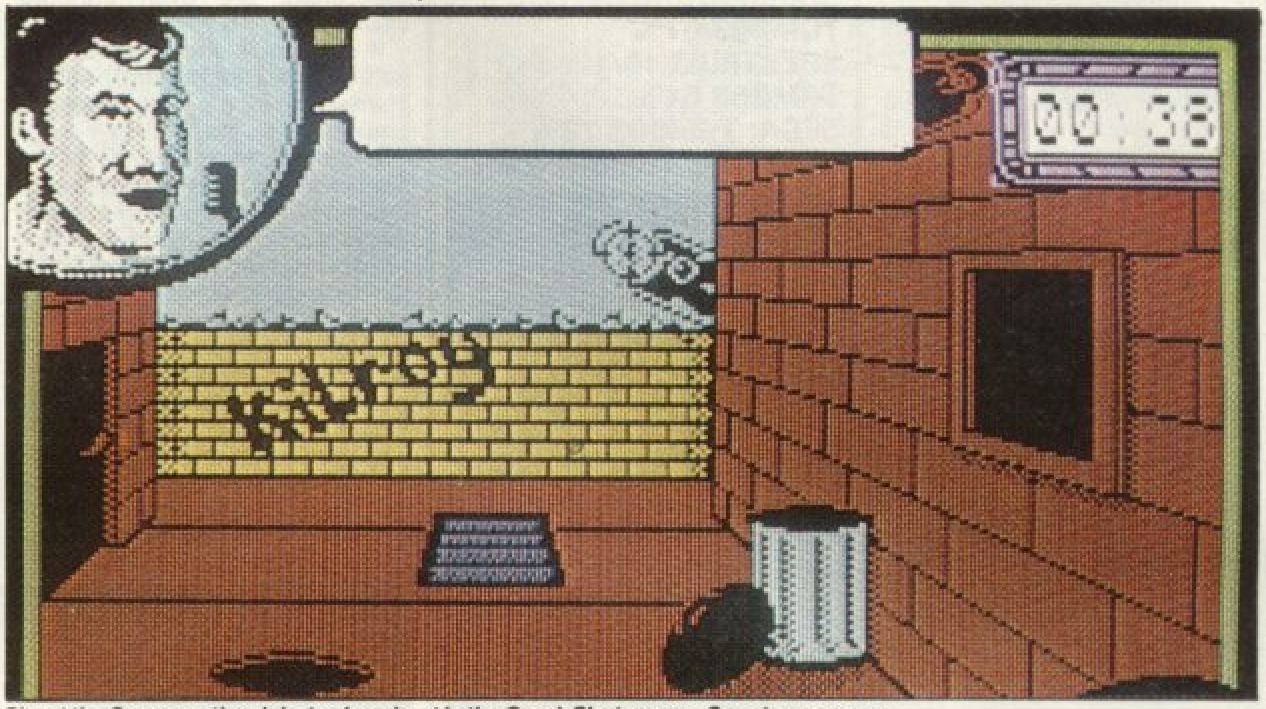
Bernie, the bolt

Crossbow is the toughest event. Before firing at one of three available distances, the string tension is set. This is done in the time-honoured tradition of waggling the joystick frantically left and right. The faster you waggle, the higher the tension and the more powerful the shot. When tension is set, you aim, taking into account gravity and wind direction. There is no time to rest between shots because the seconds tick away – the more shots you fire in the allotted time the greater your score.

The final event takes place in a water channel polluted with mines and underwater obstacles. You swim through the channel in as short a time as possible. Bumping into obstacles renders you helpless for a few seconds and loses you points. You can only hold your breathe for so long and have to periodically surface for air.

All through the game your zany host, Gilbert acts as score and time-keeper, as well as commenting on your performance. Should these comments be detrimental you can practise an individual event before taking part in the game proper.

Multi-sport games have been covered for a long time now. Gremlin have tried to add new life to a well-worn theme by introducing new events. Unfortunately, while they are enjoyable at first, there is little long term appeal.



Shoot the Conservative debate show host in the Crack Shot range – Spectrum screen

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £7.99
Diskette: £12.99

Although colour-clash has been avoided, graphics are not particularly outstanding – more functional. There is little noticeable difference in difficulty between this and the Amstrad version. Once again Multi-load is used – though it is hard to see why. This is the better of the two games, but only because of its aesthetic appeal.

OVERALL 68%



A fight on the tiles whilst portly Sumos look on – Amstrad screen

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £9.99
Diskette: £14.99

Graphically this version is the worst of the two. Colour is garish and the music is painful to listen to. Multi-load has been used; on cassette it takes longer for events to load than to play.

OVERALL 62%

OTHER FORMATS

Commodore 64/128 soon, cassette £9.99, diskette £14.99

"Gremlin have tried to add new life to a well-worn theme"

VERSION UPDATE

OUT RUN
US Gold

Amiga: £24.99

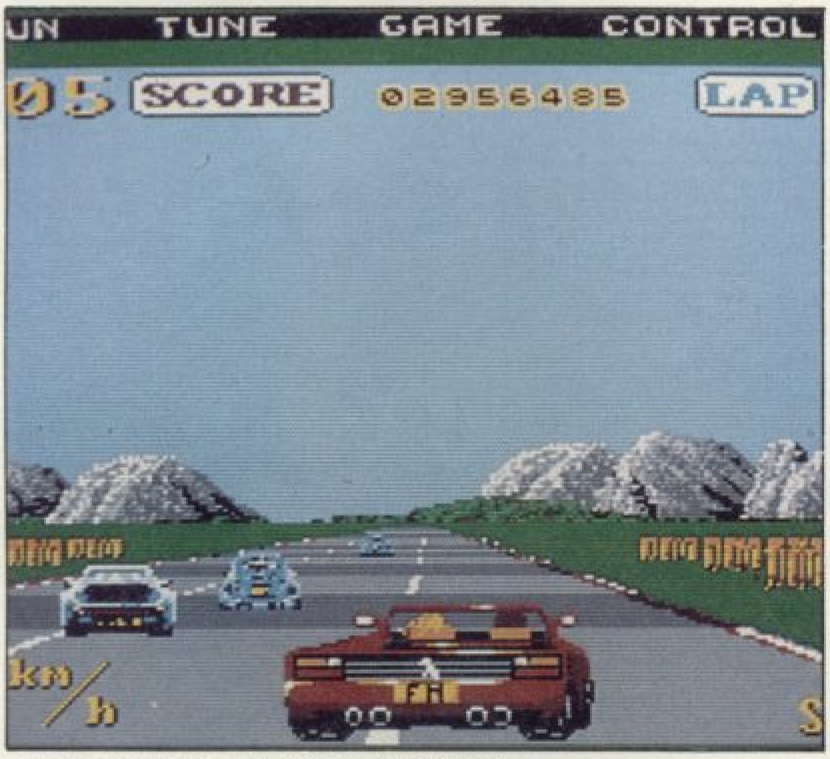
THE AMIGA conversion of the smash Sega coin-op has been almost as eagerly awaited as was the ST version. Disappointingly it is near-identical – the only major change is the inclusion of what can best be described as an over-the-top introduction. An oddly low, sampled voice announces the game, accompanied by a manic musical intro.

The illusion of speed, movement and the overall racing effect is slightly slower than on the ST. Fortunately it features the addition of detailed backgrounds and three tunes which, while not showing off the Amiga's sonics, retain some game-flow.

Despite limitations, such as the decrease in screen size (resulting in a squashed, but sleek-looking Ferrari), *Out Run* plays well on the Amiga and is a commendable conversion.

AMIGA: OVERALL 75%

COMMODORE 64/128: TGM003 67%
SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM003 61%
SEGA: TGM003 72%
ATARI ST: TGM007 79%



Squashed graphics mean you can drive flat out

VERSION UPDATE

1943: BATTLE OF MIDWAY
Go!/Capcom

Commodore 64/128: Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99
Atari ST: £19.99

1943 is one of those games about which it is hard to find anything good to write. Graphics and sound are simplistic and boring – on the C64 there are even attribute clashes!

It is a simple shoot-and-collect game in which you control a fighter plane: America's last defence against the marauding Japs. Somewhere, far out at sea, is the Japanese battleship Yamoto. Destroy this and the Japanese threat is curbed – until next time.

Your fighter is armed with machine guns which may or may not destroy the enemy depending on how thick their armour is. Additional weaponry is added by collecting POW symbols which appear on-screen.

If you manage to stay awake; carry on killing and collecting until you progress to the 16th level and the final showdown against the ultimate battleship.

Out of the two conversions, the ST makes the best of a bad job. Although, while pitched at a harder level, it lacks incentive to play on.

The C64 game is very easy to play; one of our team completed it, without loss of life, in less than twenty minutes.

Attack waves on both versions are predictable and defeating the Japanese forces would be even easier if control was less sluggish.

The original coin-op was a disappointment – which makes these good conversions.

COMMODORE 64/128: OVERALL 19%
ATARI ST: OVERALL 38%

SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM012 47%
AMSTRAD CPC: TGM012 55%

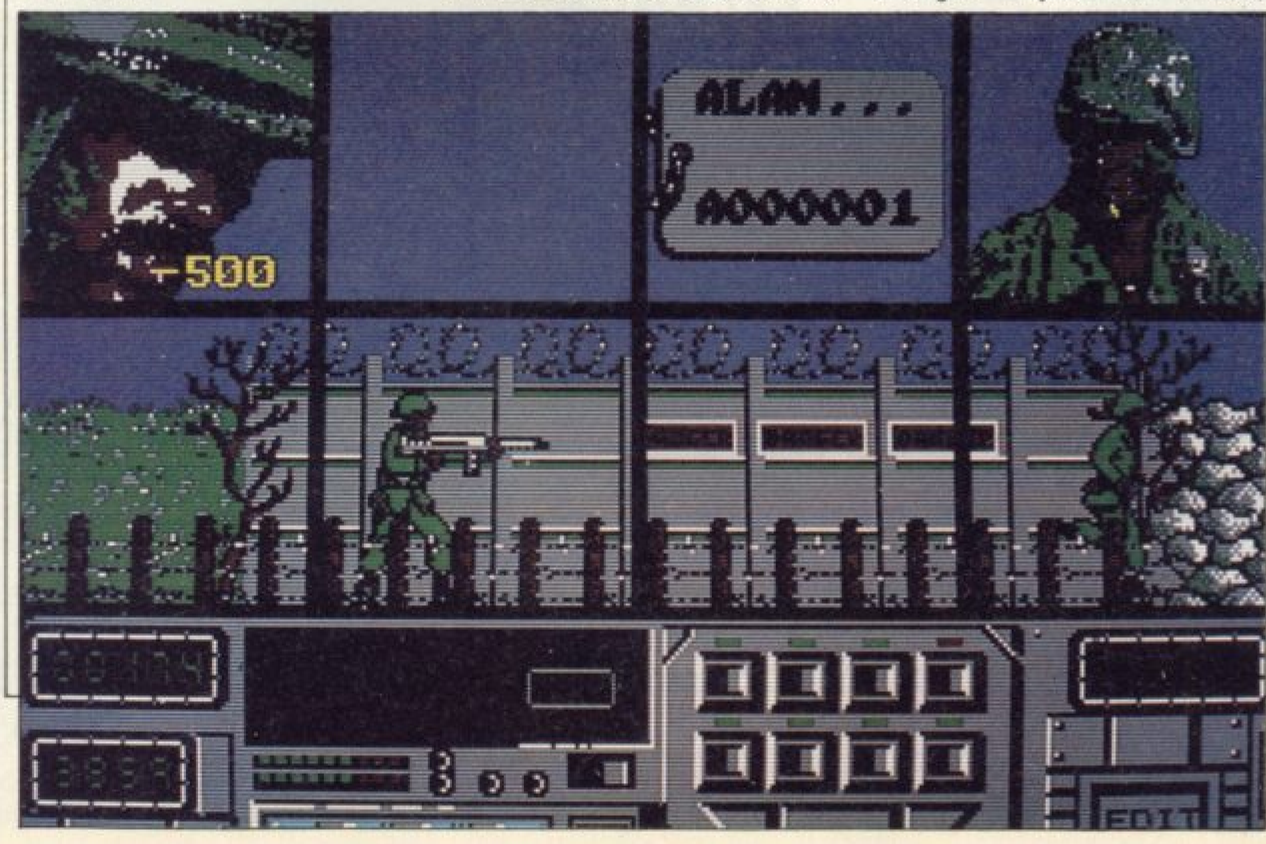

In 1943 this may have seemed like a good game

VERSION UPDATE

ACTION SERVICE
Infogrames

PC: £19.95

A load of video walls if ever I saw one



YOU are at a secret training camp, armed with a machine gun and ready to negotiate one of four preset assault courses. The walls, barbed wire, soldiers, and helicopter fire that you face may also be arranged in your own course, using an editor.

This *Combat School*-type scene simply does not have enough gameplay to warrant a standalone release. The courses, even with the construction kit, soon become boring, with only a limited number of uninspiring obstacles.

Actions at your disposal are difficult enough to handle with a joystick, but using keyboard, control is even more awkward.

Though there are a number of graphic displays options, the 16-colour EGA card has been used tentatively, with only three colours on the simply-defined soldier sprite, and two on some background features.

Scrolling judders slightly as you battle through the stages, which seem longer and so more tedious on the PC. Sound, although not terrible, is sparse, and a poor contrast to the samples of the ST version.

An insipid game made even worse in the conversion.

PC: OVERALL 29%

ATARI ST: TGM013 33%

DON'T GET MAD . . .

THE PEPSI CHALLENGE – MAD MIX GAME

US Gold

If you waded through the thronging masses at the PC Show this year, you may have seen some of *The National Computer Games Championship*, sponsored by Pepsi-Cola and organised by Newsfield. The final of this quest to find the champion gamesplayer was played on this game.

The plot of this simple maze game involves Mad, the yellow, round Pepsiman creature under your control. It was his family's job to keep Pepsivillage free of ghosts, but his father was afraid of the apparitions, and so they were left to run riot. Angered, Mad decided to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, the Mad Elder, and rid Pepsivillage of ghosts in the Pepsiman Challenge.

Fifteen scrolling mazes represent the village in which you guide Pepsiman. To complete a maze, the spheres which line the corridors are eaten. Naturally, there are adversaries to make this a problem, commonly in the form of generated ghosts.

Also appearing are Ladybothers who make a nuisance of themselves by replacing spheres, but Repugnants are worse – they clamp spheres to the floor of the maze. The only way to free them is to transform yourself into Pepsidigger by passing over the appropriate special square.

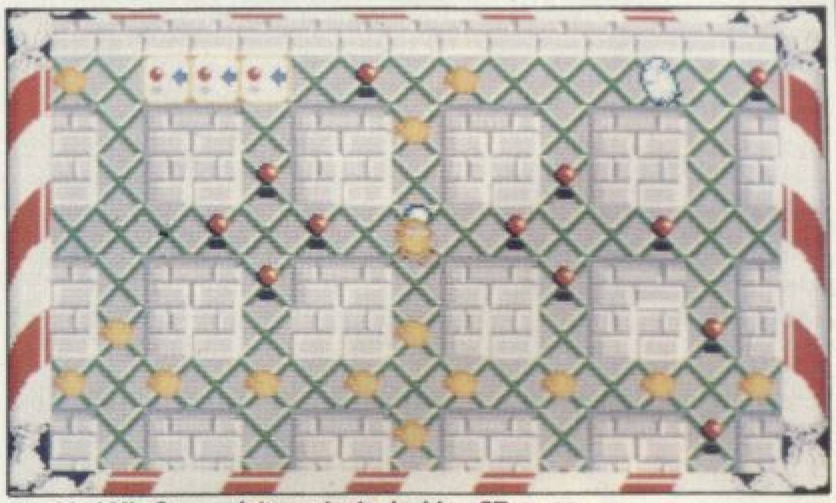
Packed mazes

Other squares turn you into Angry-Pepsiman – he can eat enemies, or a Pepsipotamus who squashes adversaries but cannot eat spheres. You transform into a Pepsiship by travelling on rails – your movement is limited to left and right along the rail, but you can shoot enemies above. The Pepsitank is used similarly, it can only move in one direction but fires in two.

There are two special maze features: auto squares – usually laid out in patterns – are marked with arrows which force you in the direction they point. L-shaped trap doors flip over as they are used, blocking the way back, they may only be entered from the correct direction.

If this all seems like *Pac-Man* with additional features, that's because it is. **Toposoft**, the programmers, have only thinly disguised the original, keeping ghosts as the bad guys and even using a round yellow hero. Additional enemies and forms of powered-up Pepsiman do not help the basically repetitive, frustrating and boring gameplay.

Although lacking some of the features, the 3-D leaps of *Pac-Mania* are much more playable, proving that plagiarism doesn't always pay.



The Mad Mix Game – let your taste decide – ST screen

ATARI ST
£14.99

To call the title music unusual is by no means a compliment. Droning lead sounds and white-noise drums grate on the ears while in-game sound effects are criminally simple for a 16-bit, particularly the hiss of gunfire. Graphics are detailed and colourful, but tiny: the lumbering Pepsipotamus is only slightly larger than the ghosts. Noticeably juddery scrolling further spoils the visuals.

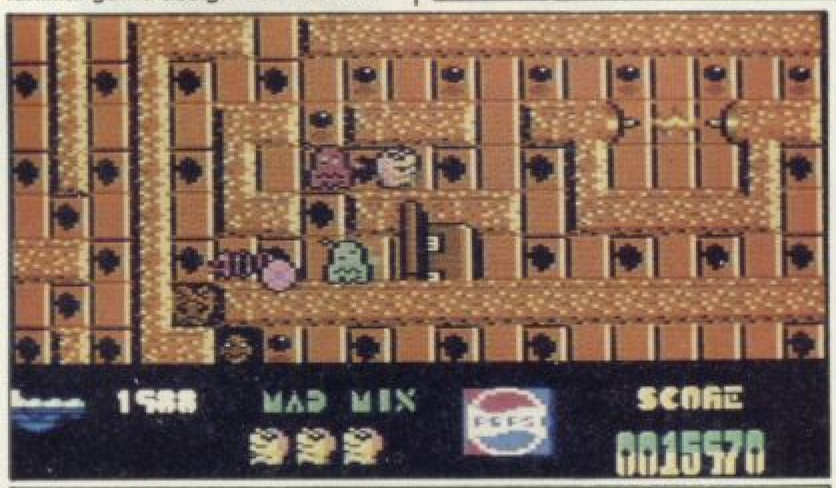
OVERALL 39%

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £7.99
Diskette: £11.99

Sticks of striped rock border the detailed monochrome maze which feature some well-animated characters, particularly the humourous Pepsipotamus. Game speed is almost on a par with the C64, but black-on-white at this speed can be a strain on the eyes. Sound effects are just clicks and beeps of acknowledgement, but there is a pleasing *Hooked On Classics*-type medley.

OVERALL 44%

A familiar-looking hero with familiar-looking enemies in a familiar game design – C64 screen



COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £7.99
Diskette: £11.99

The bouncing Toposoft logo and wobbling text on the title screen are the most impressive features. In play, the screen scrolls smoothly and swiftly – it's the fastest version – and this adds playability. Bas-relief background graphics are pleasant but bland, and sprites have a blocky, black outline. Sound effects are adequate but there are some rapidly-annoying jingles, the worst of which is triggered for no apparent reason.

OVERALL 43%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £7.99
Diskette: £11.99

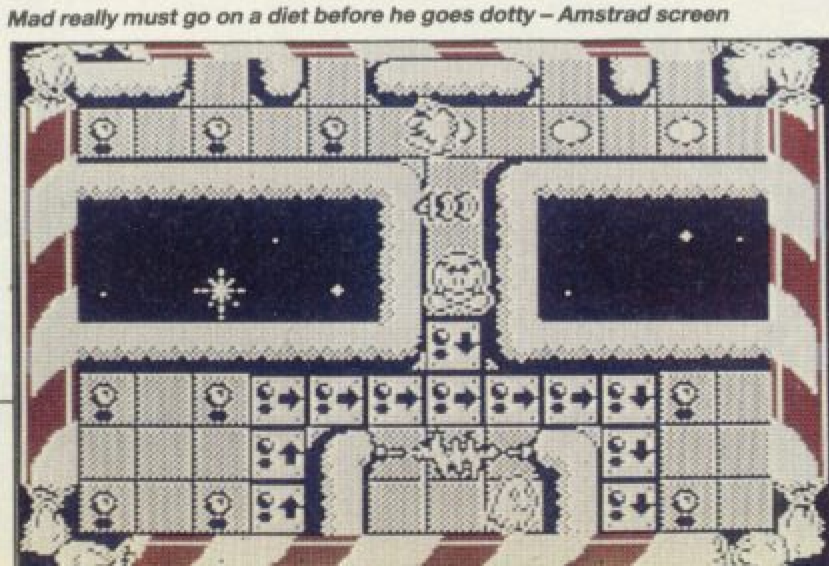
The Amstrad playing area is remarkably small, yet the maze within the rock border jerks terribly as Pepsiman crawls around the screen. The slow speed isn't helped by the crude percussive beeps which accompany the action, and although colourful, graphics are gaudy and ghost sprites blocky.

OVERALL 37%

OTHER FORMATS

MSX owners will be unexcited to hear that a version for them (cassette £7.99) will be available shortly.

Mad really must go on a diet before he goes dotty – Amstrad screen



"Additional enemies and forms of powered-up Pepsiman do not help the basically repetitive, frustrating and boring gameplay."

FIVE FIST-FULLS OI

ROY OF THE ROVERS

NEWSFLASH! Four of the Melchester Rovers five-a- side football team have been kidnapped... hours before a crucial fund-raising game to save their ground from grasping property developers. Time is running out and player-manager Roy Race MUST rescue his team-mates, dodging danger, escaping ambushes and boobytraps in order to play the most important game of his career!

CBM 64/128 £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
AMSTRAD £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
SPECTRUM £7.99 cassette £12.99 disk

GARY LINEKER'S HOT SHOT

The most realistic football game ever produced for your computer. Play in a full-scale eleven-a-side football game complete with sliding tackles, throw ins, corners, goal kicks, fouls and even the dreaded referee with his red card. With all these features to watch out for will you have what it takes to match the shooting skills of England's top striker in Gary Lineker's Hot Shot.

CBM 64/128 £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
AMSTRAD £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
SPECTRUM £7.99 cassette £12.99 disk
ATARI ST £19.99 disk IBM PC £19.99 disk
AMIGA £19.99 disk

SUPERSPORTS

As varied and as bizarre a collection of unique sporting events as you are eve likely to find. Have you got a good enough eye to be a 'cr shot'; the nerve to attempt the 'devil dive'; the strengt to 'smash slates'; the accur to shoot the 'cross bow'; finally (and unbelievably! triumph over an 'underw assault course'. Up to four players can compete in outrageous challenge!



GREMLIN



Screen shots from various formats.

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha Hou



SPORTING POWER
9.99 cassette
14.99 disk
9.99 cassette
14.99 disk
7.99 cassette
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GARY LINEKER'S SUPERSKILLS
Hot on the heels of the hugely successful Superstar Soccer comes Superskills, again endorsed by England's star striker. To command a permanent place in the national team means dedication – dedication towards hard work and training. The national coach has designed an extensive training programme which will improve your fitness, ball control, sharpness and accuracy. Can you prove yourself to be both physically and mentally agile and alert?
CBM 64/128 £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
AMSTRAD £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
SPECTRUM £7.99 cassette £12.99 disk
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ULTIMATE GOLF
The ultimate golf simulation for your computer. See how different shots affect the way the ball is hit. Let the computer determine your skill level. Perfect your technique by following the example of the computer golf player. A must for all enthusiasts who've tried their hand at computer golf but never met a challenge as testing and enthralling as Ultimate Golf.
CBM 64/128 £9.99 cassette £14.99 disk
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IBM PC £19.99 disk
AMIGA £19.99 disk
Gary Linekers SUPERSKILLS
ULTIMATE Golf
GREMLIN
Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423.

VERSION UPDATE

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
Firebird

Spectrum 48/128: Cassette £7.95

GRAFTGOLD'S latest release delves into the world of demons and magic, where Sarnak, the hero, attempts to restore the mysterious Zodiac Power Source disrupted by the evil Krillys.

Weapons and magical tablets are found on the scrolling platforms: necessary in forming elementals which give access to different levels and eventually summon the Zodiac.

Gameplay differs considerably from the C64 original: shopping for weapons has been exchanged for simple collection, bringing it even closer to *Ghosts 'N' Goblins*, from which the game was inspired.

The two-player option has been removed, as has the shield system – one touch from a monster takes a life. The platform layouts have been drastically altered, requiring a difficult leap near the beginning of the game and making platform skills essential.

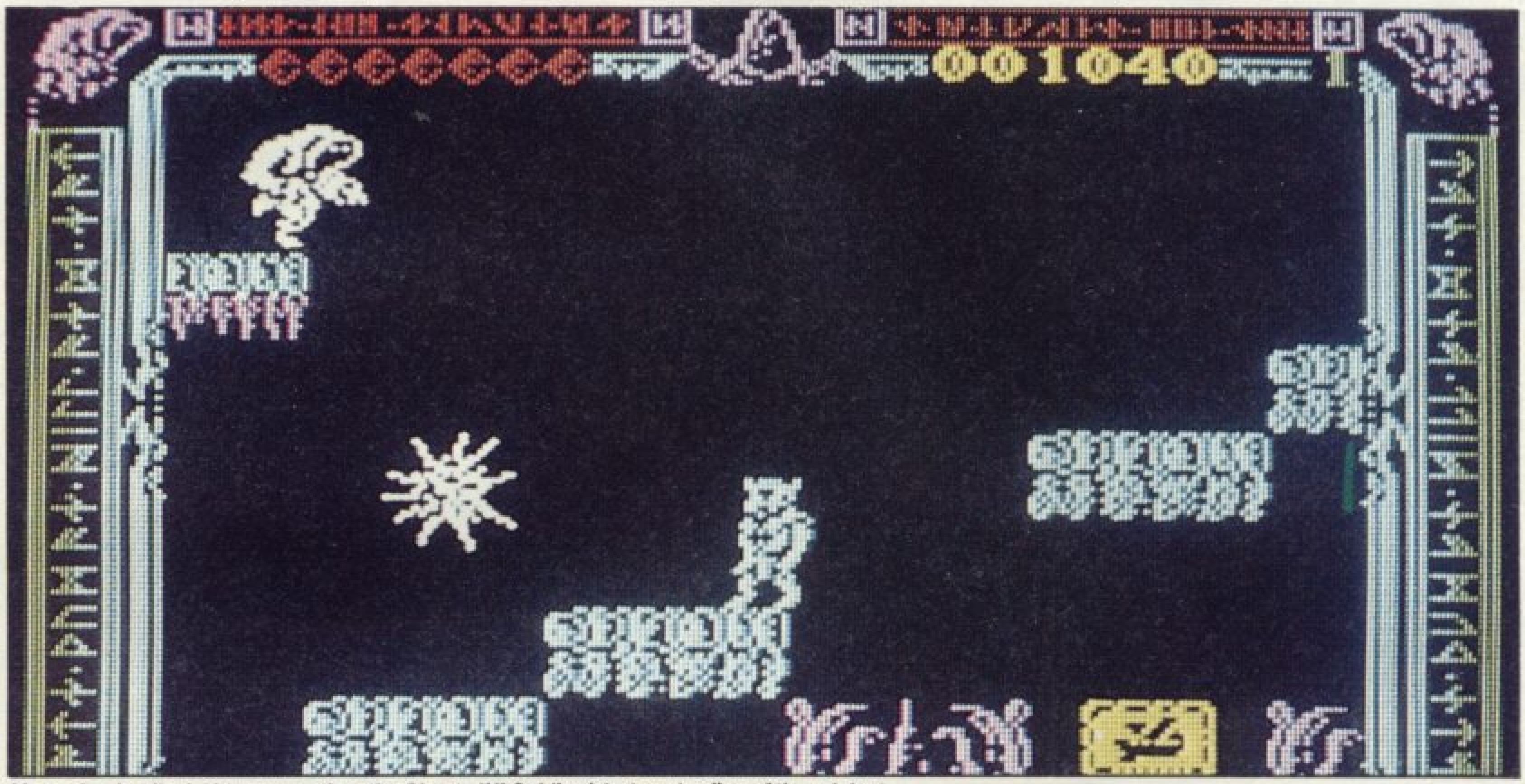
The lively screen surround includes runic markings and an attractive status panel. The liberal use of colour is continued in the play area and generally avoids clash. The screen scrolls smoothly and the characters are adequately defined, though the hero looks demonic.

Title music and sound effects are good but strangely futuristic.

With the strategic buying element missing, *Soldier of Fortune* on the Spectrum is a simple platform game mixed with a ghostly shoot-'em-up.

SPECTRUM 48/128:
OVERALL 69%

COMMODORE 64/128:
TGM012 78%



More of a simple platform game than the Ghosts 'N' Goblins/strategy trading of the original

VERSION UPDATE

What's his pitch?

International Soccer
Microdeal

Amiga: £19.95

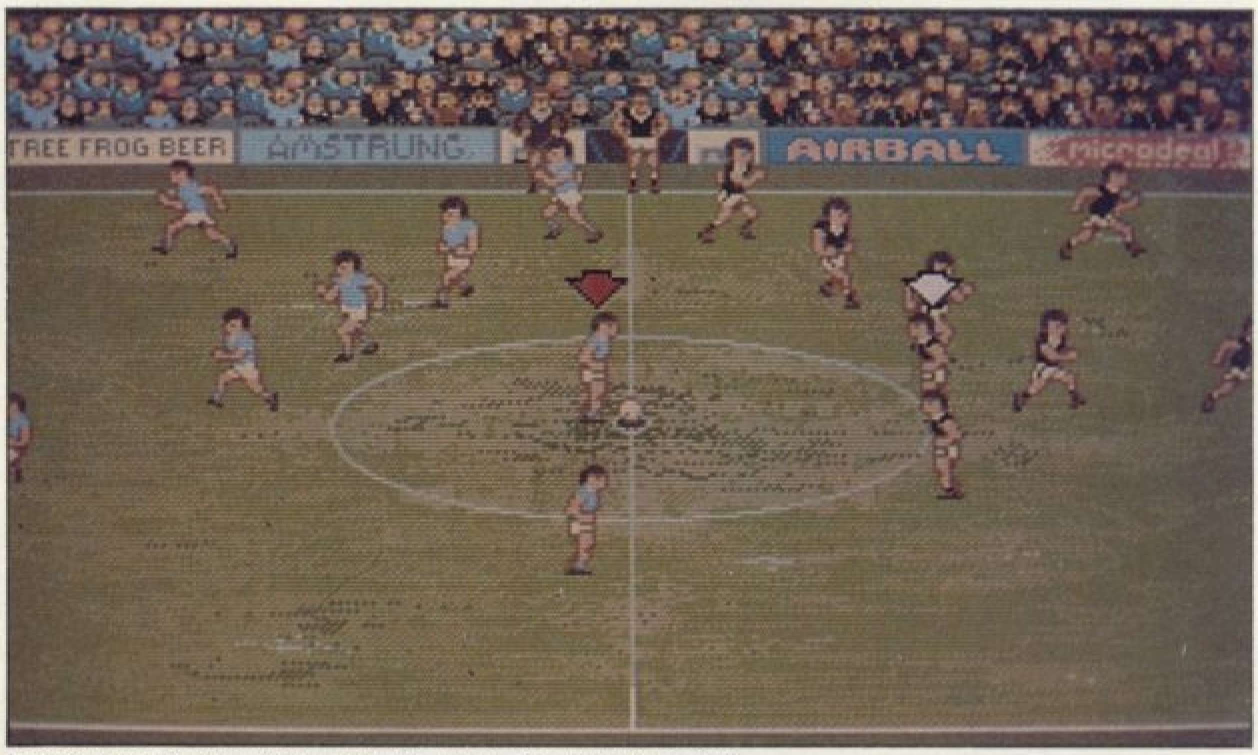
FOOTBALL on the computer usually falls into one of two formats: management or participation. *International Soccer* is the latter – perhaps one day a softwarehouse will come up with a game where you play the supporters . . .

In *IS* you control the member of your team nearest the ball – highlighted by a white arrow above his head. Throw-ins, tackles, goal kicks and penalties are all featured, as are options to change the duration of play, kickoff time, wind direction and condition of the pitch – but the best feature is the four player option, for which a Microdeal joystick adaptor is needed (£4.95).

On the whole graphics are good – players are well animated but the scrolling of the pitch is slightly jerky. Sound can be toggled between one of three tunes or match sound effects.

IS is very playable and the inclusion of nine skill levels means you're unlikely to get bored quickly.

Matchday II is the yardstick by which all other Football games are measured, *IS* doesn't steal the crown, but it's the best Soccer game on the Amiga to date.



Look at these pitch conditions. What do we pay the groundsmen for?

AMIGA: OVERALL 80%

ATARI ST: TGM009 78%

RIDERS WITH THE LASS, ARC

JOAN OF ARC
Rainbow Arts

The Anglo-French war lasted almost one hundred years. It came to a climax in the early 1400's, when the British gained a firm grip on France – she was subsequently thrown into disarray by civil war and devious doings.

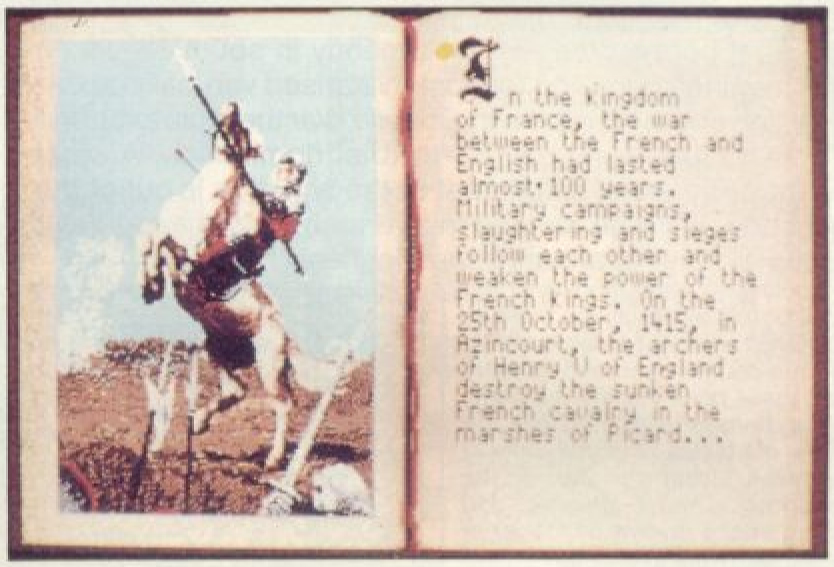
Heir to the thrown, Charles (son of mad Charles VI), was abandoned, and the English hold grew stronger. The end of the French Kingdom was in sight.

Said to have been addressed by Saint Michael, Joan of Arc was ordered to save Charles by ordaining him in Reims. After meeting in Chinon, 1429, and discussing the troubled times, Charles appointed her as a General. Giving her a small army, her first task was to free Orleans from the British.

This is where the game begins. A map of France is displayed, divided into various areas. The controlling countries are indicated by their colour – blue for France. A pointer is used to choose pop-up menu options and select areas.

At the beginning of the game, Orleans and Reims must be conquered to give you, as Charles, sovereignty and a base from which to liberate other areas of the country.

There are two forms of army battle. Whilst travelling, battles involve the distant control via icons of your forces: the advance (or retreat) of cavalry, soldiers and archers, the latter's firing, plus the firing and launch angle of cannon. Damage to all involved is displayed as bar graphs.



A fairy-tale beginning to open your burning ambitions in France

Cavalier attitude

When attempting to take over a town, a solitary soldier is edged along the drawbridge of the settlement's castle. One by one, enemies come through the portcullis and engage your soldier in sword combat. Arrows shot through slits in the castle wall are dodged and soldiers fought until either the castle is entered or your man is killed. The inner-tower walls are then scaled, avoiding thrown rocks and poured boiling oil.

The situation is reversed when a French-controlled town is attacked: you guide a soldier at the top of three ladders and drop rocks or oil on invaders' heads, otherwise the town is lost – pushing ladders was obviously not invented in 1429.

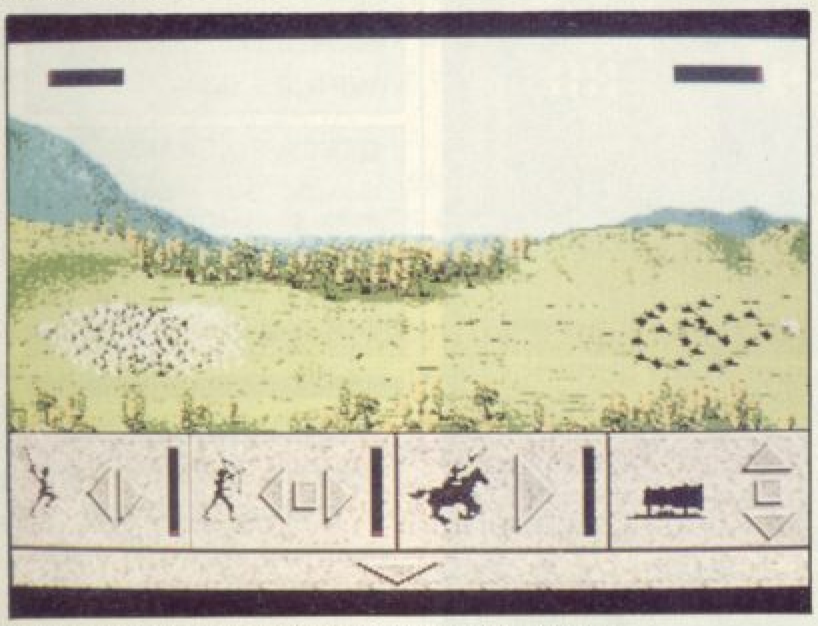
Other combat occurs when a British Cavalier challenges you to a joust-type duel. Weapons are selected from a choice of three and you ride your mount and wield your weapon until you or your opponent has no energy left.

When you've been made king, the English-occupied areas of France are regained, partly by warring but also by diplomacy and sneakiness. Treaties and alliances are made, noblemen kidnapped for ransom, and various parties kept happy. Decisions in these areas are made by judging short profiles of the people you deal with.

Engaging in sword-thrashing combat to gain sectors of a map in historic times is similar to *Defender Of The Crown*, but *Joan Of Arc* is superior in playability, both in its arcade and strategy elements. Dexterity is needed in combat and brainpower required for the diplomatic/strategy facets. Becoming King requires much practice and should provide many hours of challenging play as you attempt to free France from the clutches of those nasty British.



Planning your moves for the liberation of France from those evil British.



Directing your armies warring factions in the field of battle

ATARI ST
£19.99

Visual and aural presentation let this game down, but luckily don't spoil gameplay. The map screen is cleanly drawn, but the arcade sequences have blurry digitised monochrome castles overlayed with ill-fitting bright soldiers. Sound is sparse, consisting of inappropriate bleeps and some nicely OTT scream samples. Disk access is frequent and control response sometimes lax.

OVERALL 83%

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga (£24.99) and PC (£19.99) are imminent.

"Dexterity is needed in combat and brainpower required for the diplomatic/strategy facets"

APE A GUERILLA

GUERILLA WAR
Imagine

Cruel oppressors are ten-a-penny in south American settings common to most militarised vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-ups. In *Guerilla War* the dictator is one who just won't say no to total domination. A coup d'état or peaceful settlement of the situation is out of the question. It's time to send in two men from the toughest group of fighters around - the Marines!

Following a beach landing at the start of the first level, the marines fight their way up-screen, wasting all who dare to approach. Infantry and tanks pose military problems while barbed wire, fences and other obstacles physically hinder progress. Using grenades on the defences is most effective, and killing troops reveals bazookas or flame-throwers to pick up.

Pole position

Just for sheer sadistic pleasure and to make sure you don't fire indescriminately, the enemy have tied hostages to poles and placed them in your line of fire. Freeing prisoners replenishes your ammunition supplies – shooting them loses you points, so keep your trigger-finger still whenever they're near.

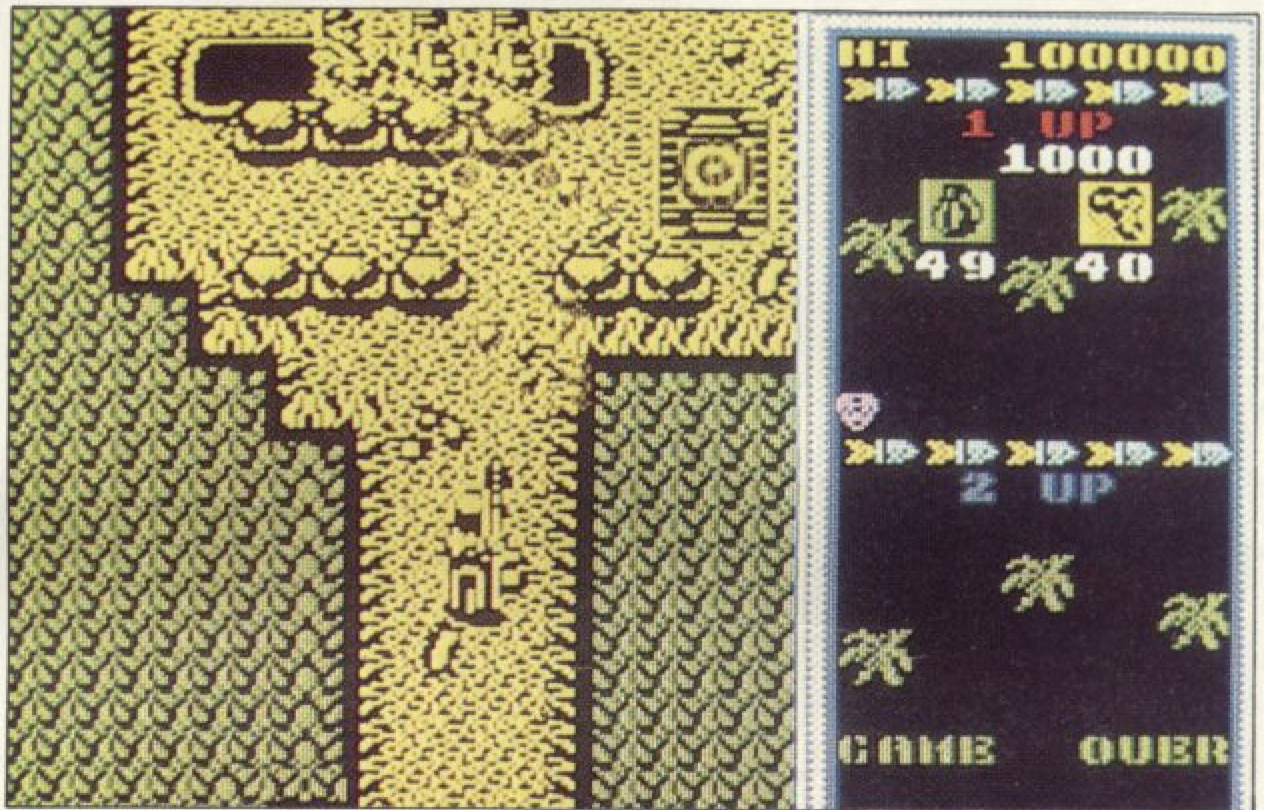
In true *Ikari Warriors* style, tanks are carelessly left lying around for your Marines to board and use. Unfortunately they are susceptible to mines, grenades and running out of fuel – if you're inside when one goes up, you go up as well.

After successfully negotiating bridges, villages and military defences, you reach the end of each of five levels where a mega-opponent awaits. Several well-placed grenades, bazooka or flame-thrower rounds should vanquish the enemy and reward you with the next level. On the last level the dictator is the threat standing between you and victory. But then no-one said life as a Guerilla was easy.

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £8.95
Diskette: £14.95

Guerilla War **brings back the ideas and violence of** Ikari Warriors. **It is difficult to play, due mainly to the monochrome soldiers and tanks, they merge with backdrops. Multi-load on the 48K Spectrum and a rather chaotic two player mode don't help much. But if you really want another** IW **clone,** GW **is an acceptable offering.**

OVERALL 63%



The long-awaited but soon forgotten Ikari Warriors sequel – Spectrum screen

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

Much the same as the Spectrum version – although it doesn't feature the well-defined graphics it makes effective use of the Amstrad's colours. These additional hues improve playability. Above average one- or two-player all-action fodder, but nothing special.

OVERALL 64%

OTHER FORMATS

Guerilla War **should soon make its violent debut on the Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64/128 (Cassette £9.95, Diskette £14.95), Atari ST (£19.95) and Amiga (£24.95).**

"Well-placed grenades, bazooka or flame-thrower rounds should vanquish the enemy"



Ooh look, an armoured vehicle to steal! Tanks a bunch! – Amstrad screen

Lombard RAC rally



Atari ST, Amiga and PC £24.95



See the driver steer and change smoothly through each of the gears



Drive down twisty lanes at night with an incredible 3D view of the road



Use all your powers of concentration to negotiate the mountain range



Build up or repair your car at any time in the well-equipped workshop

Screenshots from Atari ST version

Five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . GO!

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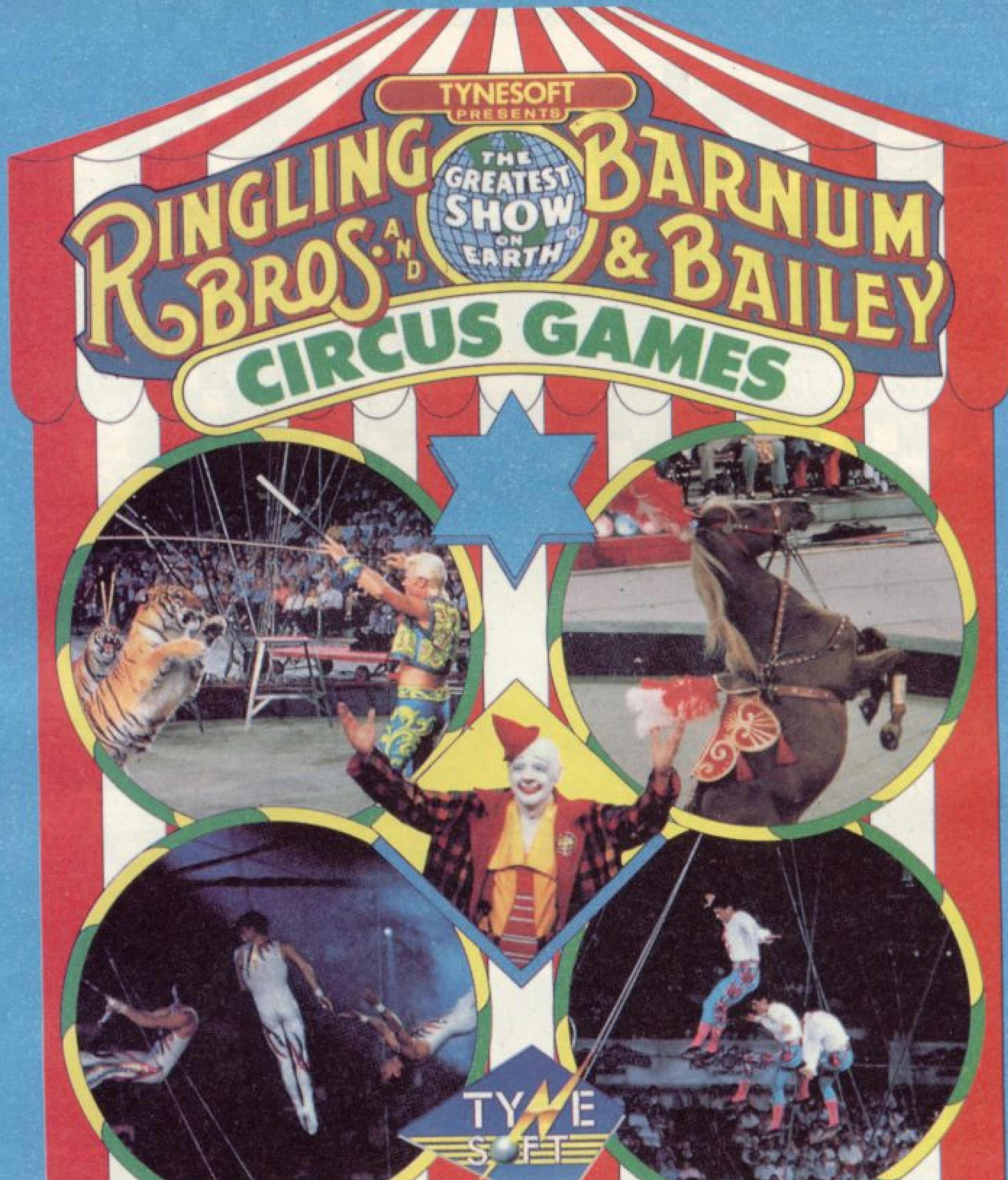
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MANDARIN SOFTWARE

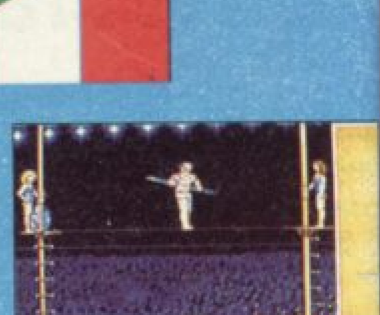
in association with RedRat











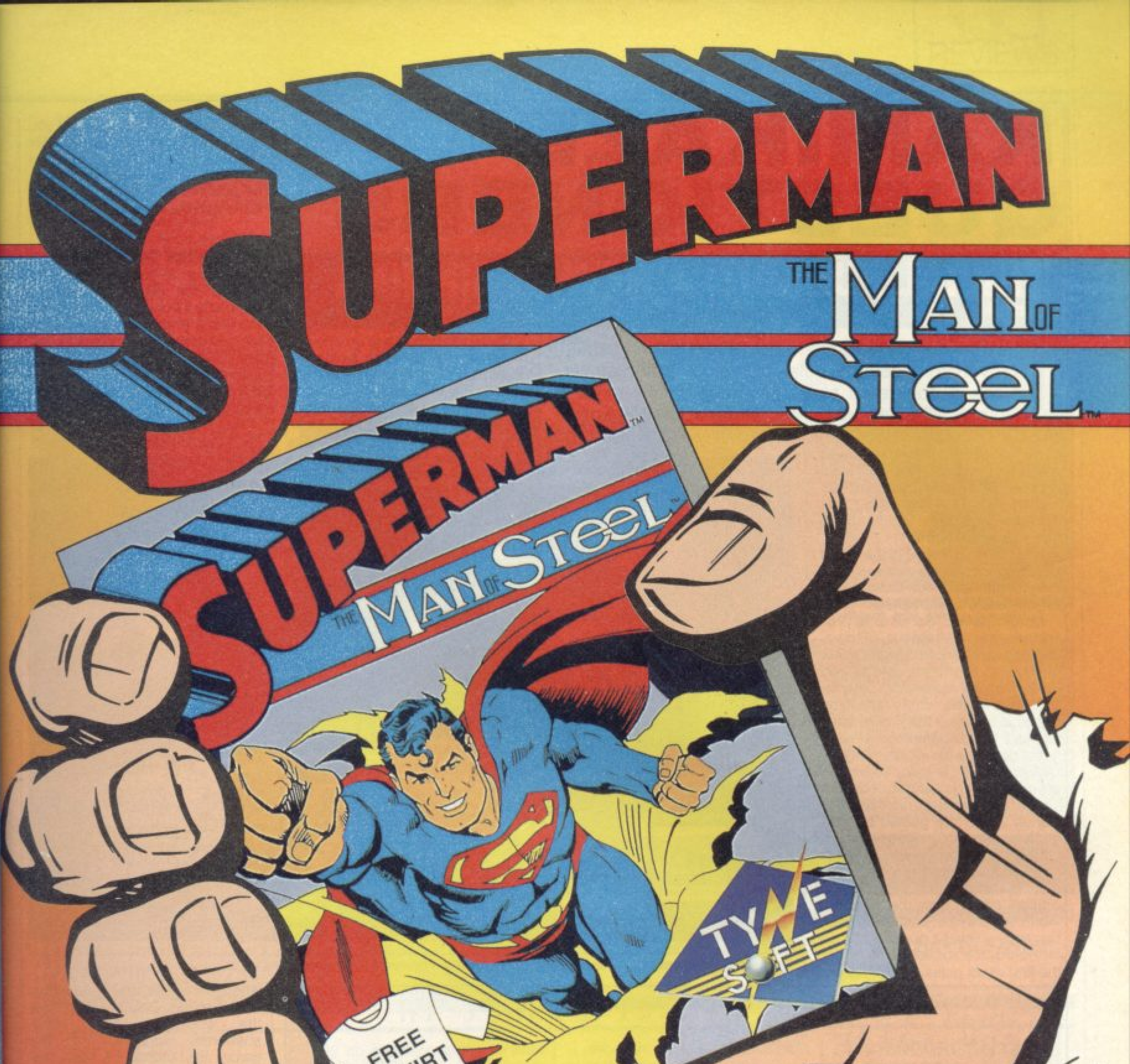
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ST / AMIGA / PC *£24.95* CBM 64 CASS *£9.95* DISK *£14.95*
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KAMIKAZE QUESTIONERS

TRIVIAL PURSUIT: A NEW BEGINNING

Domark

The runaway-hit board game of 1986 (1987 and 1988!) proved immensely popular, home computer conversions encountered similar success. Now, through Domark, the programmers, **Oxford Digital Enterprises**, have extended their ideas to universal proportions!

In the year 2045, the Age of Earth reaches its less than graceful climax. The birthplace of the human race is dying from mass pollution and Man looks to the stars for a new home.

The planet Genus 2 is the world destined to provide a new beginning for humanity – civilization sets off in rockets to start anew.

Unfortunately, Genus 2 is protected by mysterious Elders, planet guardians who won't allow anyone to live there unless they prove themselves worthy. Only by being shown the human race to be expert in trivia will the Elders allow Genus 2 to be humanised.

To prove their worth, players take on the role of galactic explorers searching galaxies for objects. These are the keys to reaching Genus 2 and are gained by correctly answering questions.

Beginning on Earth, players need to first board a rocket. The station commander, TP from the original game, bars the way and won't let players pass until they correctly answer a question. Once on board, the rocket takes off for the first of six galaxies.

Each galaxy is made up of many planets, one of which holds the object allowing access to the next galaxy. Players select a planet and beam down to answer questions posed by an alien. Musical, graphic and standard questions are asked, followed by a 'Did you get it right?' prompt. Anyone low down enough to cheat by answering 'Yes' all the time deserves to be pummelled into the ground by other players.

Prisoner of Elders

Answering a question correctly causes the planet to explode removing it from play and allowing the player to concentrate on those left. Failing to get the question right allows the next player a turn.

Eventually the hallowed object is found and the next galaxy is only a question away.

Anyone clever enough to get all six objects travels to Genus 2 where six Elders face the player in a final round. Only one Elder has the question which, when answered correctly, wins the game, the others are false and merely delay the player. If Elder's questions are correctly answered they leave the room, narrowing down the suspects for the player until the true Elder is found. Other players get to choose the final question category for the potential winner.

As in the original game, score charts can be displayed, new blocks of questions loaded in, a time limit imposed and other features familiar to those who've played *Trivial Pursuit* are present. And as such the title of a *New Beginning* is a dubious one.



'Space, the final frontier . . . ' And this isn't even the Star Trek review – Amiga screen



Beginning your quest by answering a rocket launching question – C64 screen

COMMODORE 64/128

Cassette: £14.95
Diskette: £19.95

Graphically average but sporting smooth scrolling, *TP II* isn't as attractive or well presented as other versions, but the gameplay is intact.

OVERALL 59%

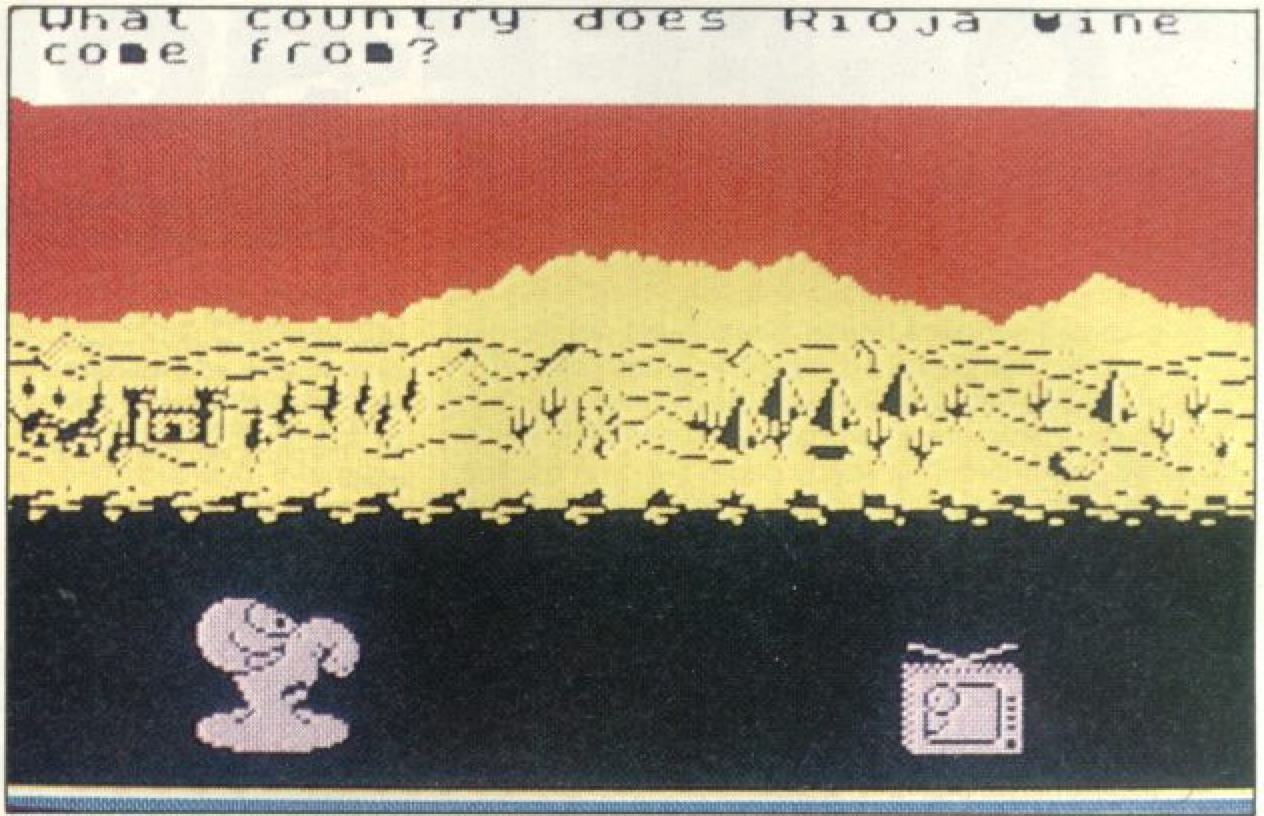
Not very enjoyable for one player, *Trivial Pursuit: A New Beginning* relies on multiple players to get the most out of the game. Entertainment stems from friendly rivalry between players rather than the game itself.

This sequel is not a significant improvement over the original but should still be fun to play with friends and family at parties or Christmas time – if you don't already own the board game.

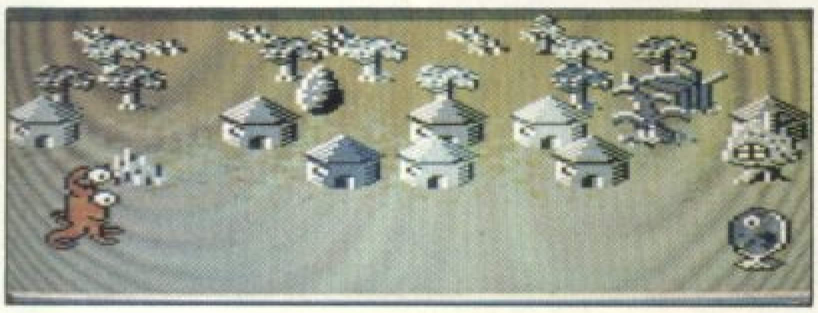
AMIGA
£19.95

The most attractive version, but the worst for making use of its host. The rotating planets are average, featuring some atrocious patterns. Totally mystifying is the primitive use of the sound chip for music questions and FX. A more user-unfriendly game than the other versions due to the lack of humourous responses.

OVERALL 60%



Planet-hopping is incidental, inessential, immaterial, inconsequential, trifling, insignificant, trite, fatous, peurile . . .



SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £14.95
Diskette: £19.95

Tortured tunes are made up for by extensive colours and pleasant spaceship-views of galaxies. This version makes better than average use of the host machine and follows on quite well from the more traditional style of *Trivial Pursuit*.

OVERALL 69%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £14.95
Diskette: £19.95

When the Amstrad is used well by programmers, it really comes into its own. *A New Beginning*, with graphics and presentation bettering other 8-bit versions, is just such a game.

OVERALL 71%

OTHER FORMATS

Expect *Trivial Pursuit: A New Beginning* on the ST soon, £19.95

"Relies on multiple players to get the most out of the game"

VERSION UPDATE

APOLLO 18
Accolade

PC: £24.95

HAVE you got the right stuff to take part in a trip to the moon? That's the question Accolade ask in this recreation of the first ever flight to the moon. Split into seven stages, *Apollo 18* perches you on top of several thousand tons of high explosive for blast-off into the blackness of space.

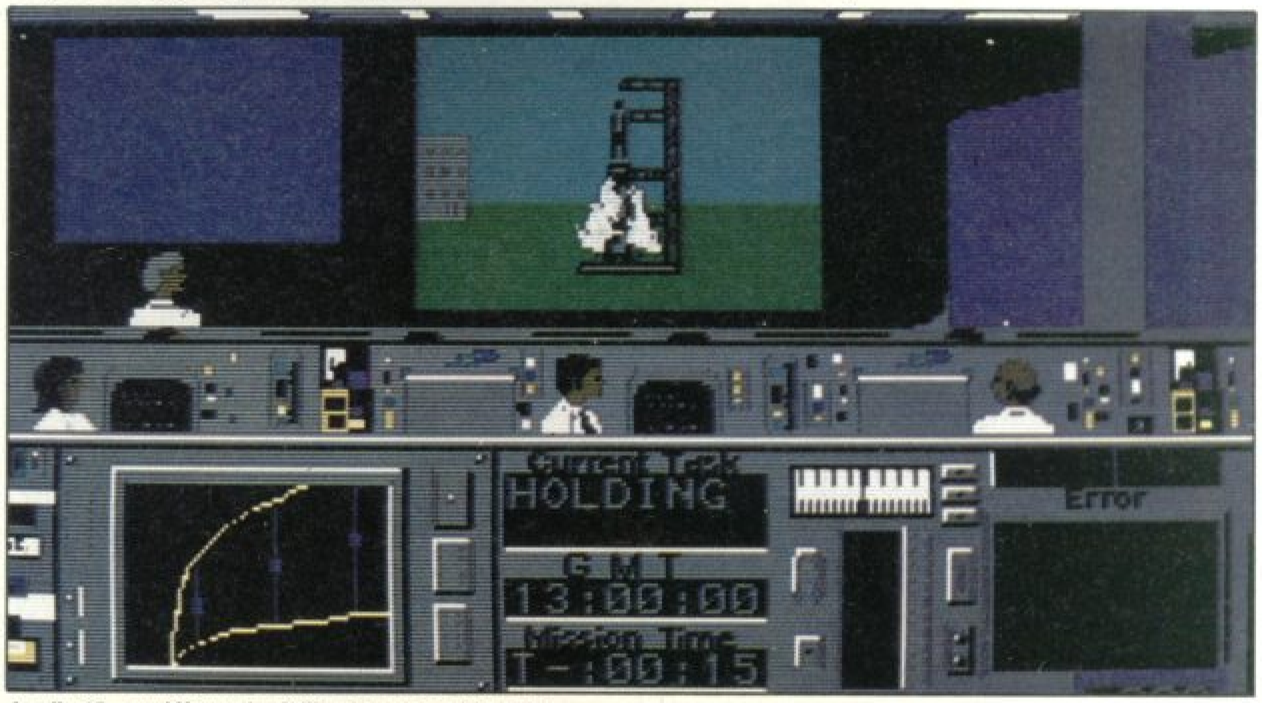
Docking in space, a lunar landing, a moon and spacewalk, satellite recovery and re-entry await the budding astronaut.

The 16 colours of the EGA graphic board are put to good use, although the same can't be said of the mediocre sounds. A technical, and as such faithful, look at the most memorable of spaceflights, the variety and challenge of *Apollo 18*'s sub-games holds your interest – despite its lack of depth.

By no means pushing forward the boundaries of PC graphic quality, *Apollo 18* is playable at all stages and a good game all round – although no real improvement over the original C64 game.

PC: OVERALL 74%

COMMODORE 64/128: TGM004 73%



Apollo 18 – and if you don't like to you can blast off

COFFEE SQUAD

MANHATTAN DEALERS

Silmarils

Little-known software house Silmarils are not the sort of cautious company to produce nice, safe, save-the-world shoot-'em-ups. Instead, they intend to make a perhaps controversial impact with their first major release by delving into the seedy depths of drug dealing. Heroin? Cannabis? Cocaine? No – caffeine!

The streets of downtown New York – Manhattan – are not the safest of places to roam. But amongst the muggers and street gangs is a far more corrupt form of life – drug dealers. Gaining riches by peoples greed and misery, they are one of the lowest forms of life. Drug pushers are only part of a vast and ever-growing organisation known as Manhattan Dealers. From over-seas, large shipments of drugs are being smuggled to Manhattan docks and into supposedly disused warehouses. From there, the street distribution team get their hands on the noxious substances.

You are Inspector Harry and want to put a stop to this evil organisation. Not only do you intend to seize and destroy all illegal drugs but also hope to put Manhattan dealers out of action. To do this, many pushers must be beaten to a pulp and the ringleaders tracked down and KO'd for good.

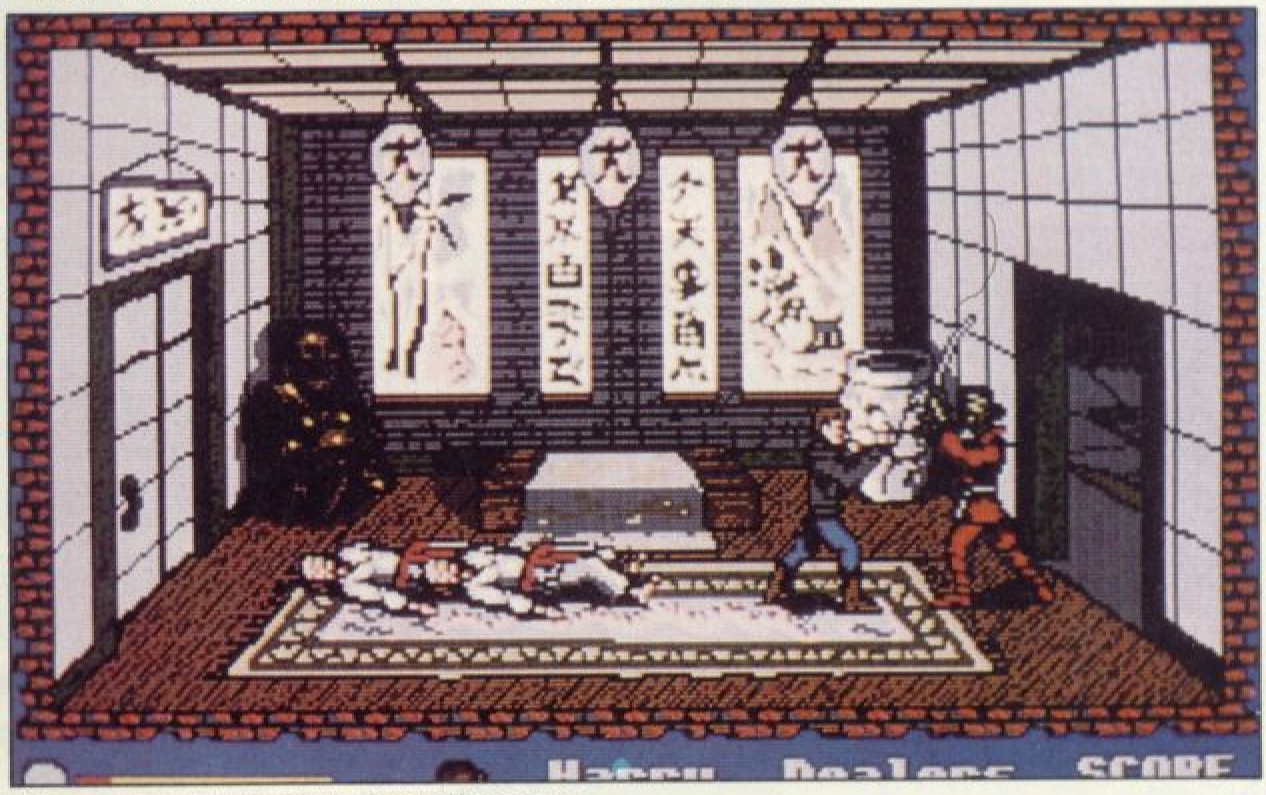
The caffeine scene

Unarmed combat skills and deft footwork – performed with joystick or keyboard – are needed to avoid traps. Four kick and two punch moves are available, plus the ability to pick up and run.

Flick-screen scenes are fought through, from streets of the Bronx to grubby basketball courts, then onto the docks by the Hudson river and into the mystical Chinatown. Pushers you meet and defeat drop packets of drugs which are picked up to increase your haul and lessen dealers' stocks. Energy lost in combat can be regained by dropping the drugs into a flaming steel drum.

Enemies met are quite humourous. Punks complete with Mohican hairstyles attack with bicycle chains or chainsaws, sports fans wearing day-glo leotards wield clubs and Samurai warriors leap at you with comical cries of 'Banzai!'.

A feeling of accomplishment is generated as each pusher is floored and his/her drugs taken, allowing progress to another scene. Two opponents in the Chinatown temple tantalisingly imply there is something special behind the door they guard, but the combat system needs mastering before its secret are investigated. While nothing special, *Manhattan Dealers* is a lively and entertaining beat-'em-up.



With a manic cry of 'Banzai!', the Samurai is upon you



Wearing clothes as loud as that, he deserves to be knocked over

ATARI ST
£19.99

Colourful but simple slim sprites are strangely and basically animated, but somehow gain their own humour from this as they fight against detailed backdrops. In-game music can be an irritant and is over jolly, while the funny samples often bring a smile to the face.

OVERALL 71%

OTHER FORMATS

An Amiga version for the new year and a PC version not far behind, both £24.99.

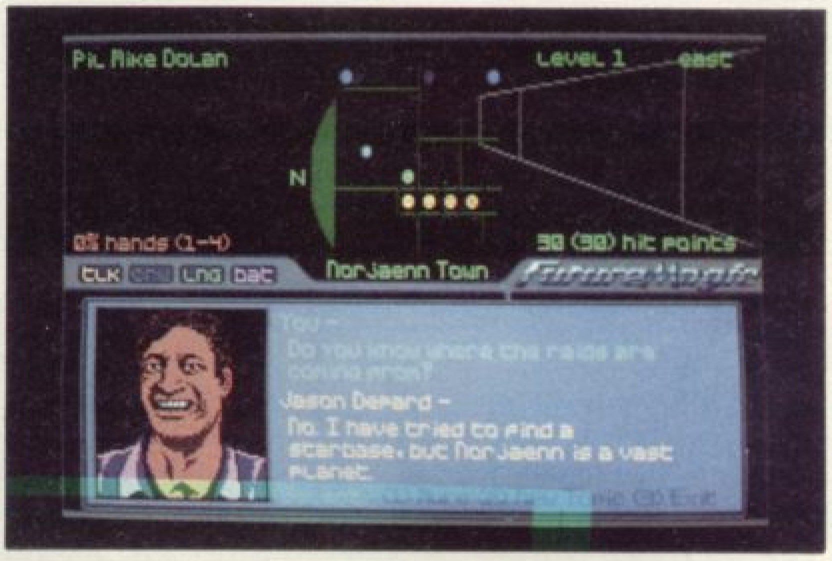
"A feeling of accomplishment is generated as each pusher is floored"

RPG TYPES

SENTINEL WORLDS

Electronic Arts

An RPG of the future, *Sentinel Worlds* tells of the Caldorre System and its continuing conflict between the Federation and mysterious pirate raiders. Destroying Federation supply ships for no apparent reason, the pirate's presence is naturally unwelcome. With orders to seek and destroy, the Federation send out eight Interceptor patrol ships in an effort to end the pirate's reign of terror.



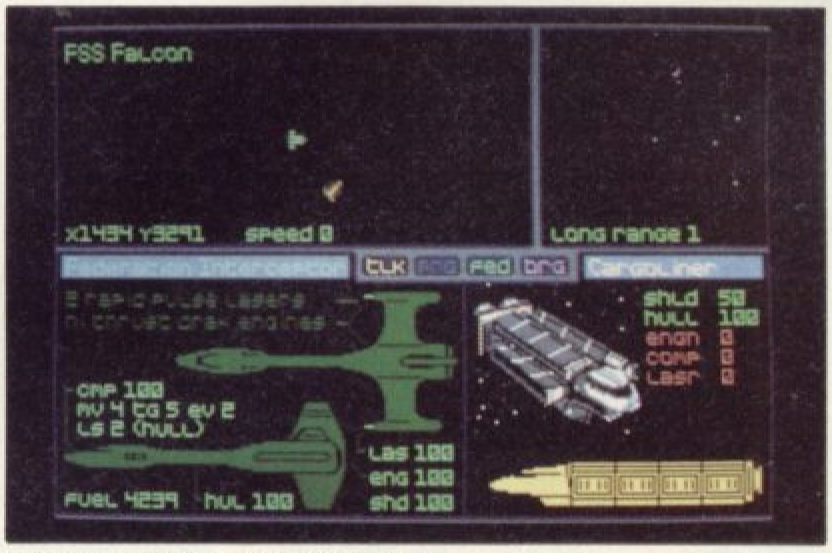
Pilot, Mike Dolan communicates with Jason Depard in one of the towns on one of the three accessible planets

Under your command are the five crew members of an Interceptor, each of whom has ship-related capabilities and personal skills. In grand RPG tradition, characters build up experience and improve their abilities through interaction with people and alien life forms, combatting raiders and performing tasks for interested parties. The rewards are promotion (plus increases in skill level) and cash with which to buy equipment.

The raiders threat is formidable, they hyperspace to Caldorre, destroy convoys and hyperspace out again, leaving no trace.

At the start of the game, you have next to no information on the raiders and need to gain it from a variety of sources – mainly through interaction with other life forms. Gathering data on the raiders' operations plays an equal part in the game alongside space combat.

Your Interceptor can hyperspace around the Caldorre system, dock at spaceports, orbit planets and engage raiders in laser fights. Battle scenes feature a short range display showing ships evading one another as they trade laser shots.



Locked onto a cargo liner, just in case

Crews through space

Luckily other ships in the area are not as hostile, in fact convoy-ship pilots welcome Interceptor crews on their craft. By accepting such invitations and communicating with other ships, vital information on the activities of raiders is gained.

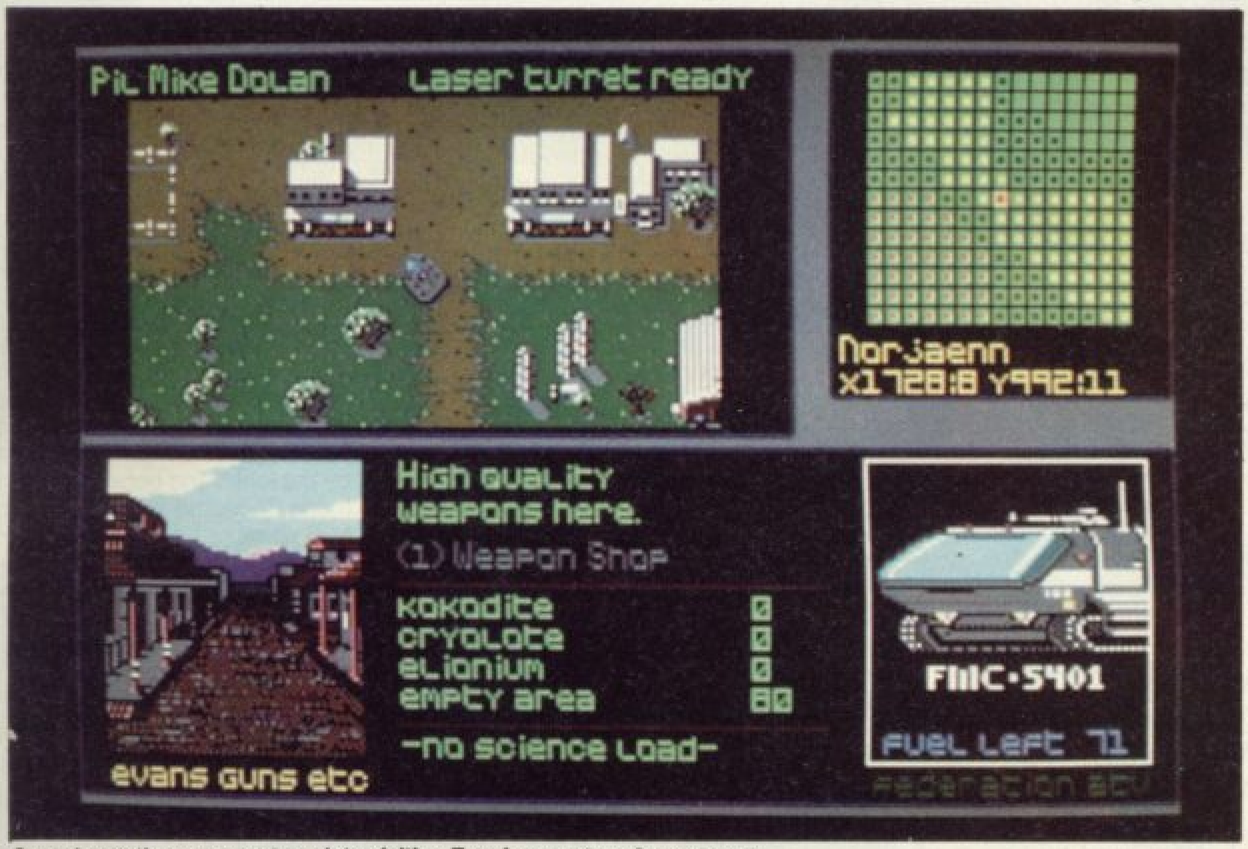
Planets are also rich in possibilites. Inhabitants may be talked to, bought from or assign tasks for you to undertake. Using an ATV transporter you move around worlds to explore new regions. Don't forget to arm your characters before beaming down, some of the planet-bound life forms aren't so friendly.

If the crew leave the safety of the ATV to enter buildings, a 3-D view of the surrounding area is shown. A radar display of the current location overlays the first-person view of movement and is the only guide to navigation. The concept of a 3-D-Maze approach to what is a critical part of the game looks a little tired, but with its inclusion the game breaks away from the normal style of RPG.

If you don't fancy beaming down to planets, why not visit the three towers high above Caldorre for some rest and relaxation. Alternatively, the spaceports orbiting each planet can be visited by pilots looking for services or missions to undertake. The Science Foundation and Space Miner's Guild offer cash for Interceptor crews willing to perform small tasks for them.

Sentinel Worlds has plenty of depth, even though it isn't an instantly-grabbing game.

Gathering clues, exploring planets and communicating with other life forms are all classic RPG traits expertly injected into this nicely formed Sci-Fi mould.



On a planet, the crew contemplate visiting Evan's gun store for weapons

PC
£24.95

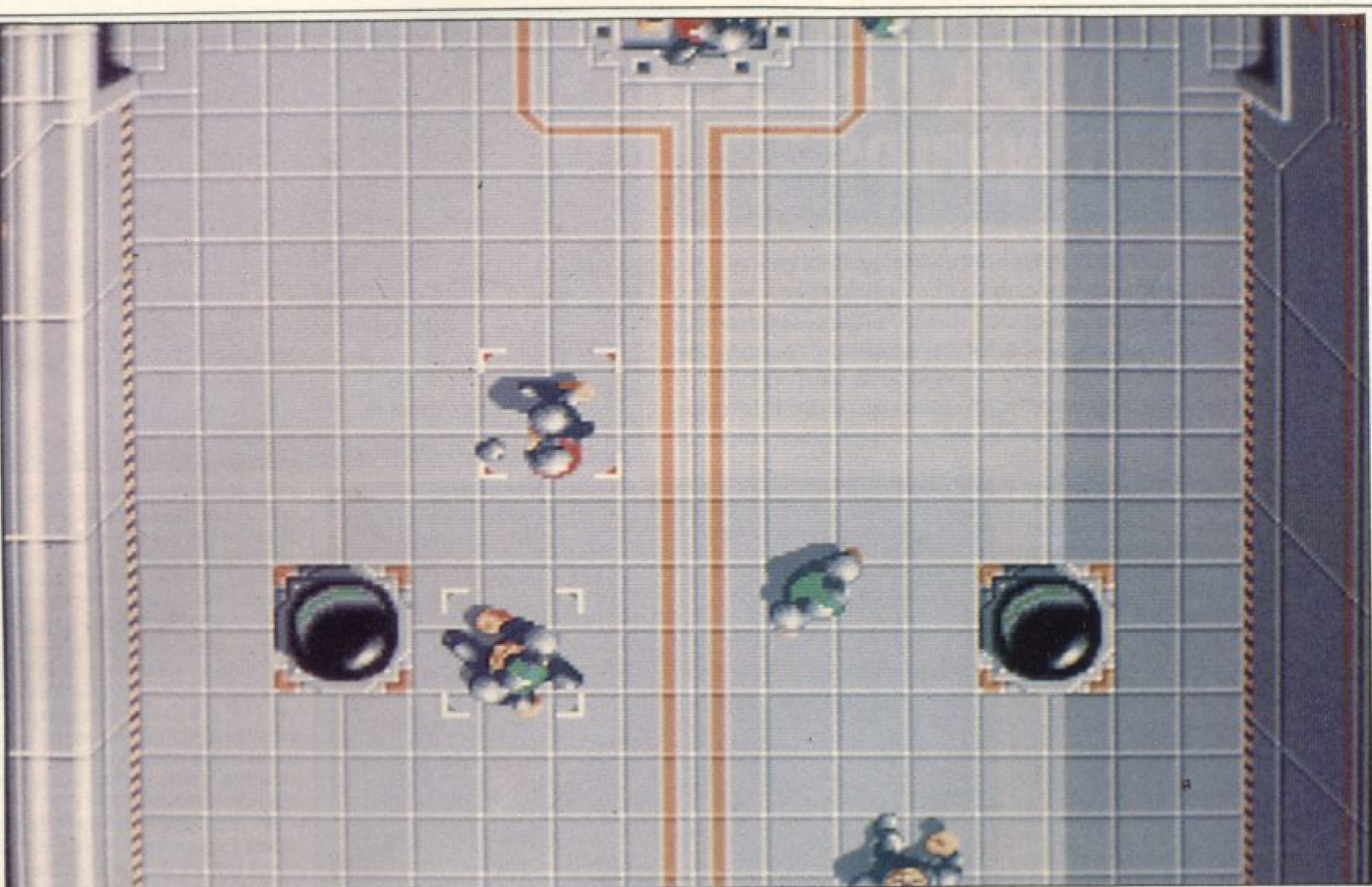
Using EGA, Sentinel Worlds **looks great, with portraits, static screens and diagrams using the full set of graphics-board colours. Unfortunately, unless you have two disk drives you may find the constant access affecting flow and playability of the game.**

OVERALL 81%

OTHER FORMATS

None planned at present

"Sentinel Worlds **has plenty of depth, even though it isn't an instantly-grabbing game"**



Sprint for the ball or punch someone in the face – in the serene sport of Speedball, the choice is yours

IN OLDEN DAYS

SPEEDBALL
Imageworks

One of the first 16-bit shoot-'em-ups to make any impact was *Xenon*, whose transformable combat vehicle was featured in the *Get Mucky* game of ITV's *Get Fresh*. The highly-acclaimed blast was programmed by the bizarrely-named **Bitmap Brothers**, a memorable monicker which hasn't appeared on the shelves since. Now, snapped up by Imageworks, their future looks bright – and violent.

Speedball is a future sport – society has become bored with its hum-drum day-to-day existence and is constantly searching for new ways of stimulation. Anything goes in Speedball, so the involved is an exciting addition to sport.

Taking place in a shiny sports arena, two teams of five players – two attacking, two defending and a goalkeeper fight it out. Their aim is to get a metal ball into the opposing team's goal zone as many times as possible within an alloted period. There are no real rules, and players can barge, tackle and punch their opponents.

Options are set up before a match commences. A single player can compete in a league or knock-out championship (against computer-controlled teams), or two human players can face each other for fierce rivalry over ten to 100 weeks (a week is a single match).

Human players select teams from the three available. Match statistics follow, plus the skill, stamina and power of team captains.

A whole old ball game

The match commences with the ball being spat out in a random direction by a centrally positioned launcher. The ball is picked up by guiding a player over it, then charging along the vertically-scrolling pitch towards the opposition's goal.

The player currently under control is highlighted by a square sight, and can punch, slide-tackle, and jump into the air to catch a thrown ball. When in possession, the ball can be thrown at a height determined by how long the fire button is depressed, but its flight-path can be hindered by hemispherical arena features.

Help comes in the form of icons, which can be picked up from the arena floor. Identified by their letter, they give: increased stamina, decreased opponent stamina, tackle protection, automatic possession, reversed joystick control, a single- or 8-direction stun-mine, temporarily frozen or slowed-down opponents.

Credits are collected and allow post-match alterations of a similar vein to temporary match icons, but also allow you to bribe officials. Extra time can be awarded and even scores altered if you're so inclined.

Speedball takes the general format of computerised team games and adds gratuitous violence and speed. Result: things go at a hectic pace, the ball rebounds all over the arena and game-flow is only hindered by the computer occasionally selecting the player who isn't nearest the ball. Interest is added by the icons and bribes, and go to make *Speedball* an exremely playable sport.

AMIGA
£24.99

Finely detailed team captain graphics introduce the game, which features beautifully shaded players and arena features. Their convincing metallic sheen is matched aurally by the sampled sound effects, which include a great car horn to signify the end of a match. A grim hi-tech tune and smooth full-screen scrolling round off the vindictive sport.

OVERALL 86%

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST at (£19.99) and PC (£24.99) versions are in the latter stages of development.

"There are no real rules, and players can barge, tackle and punch their opponents."

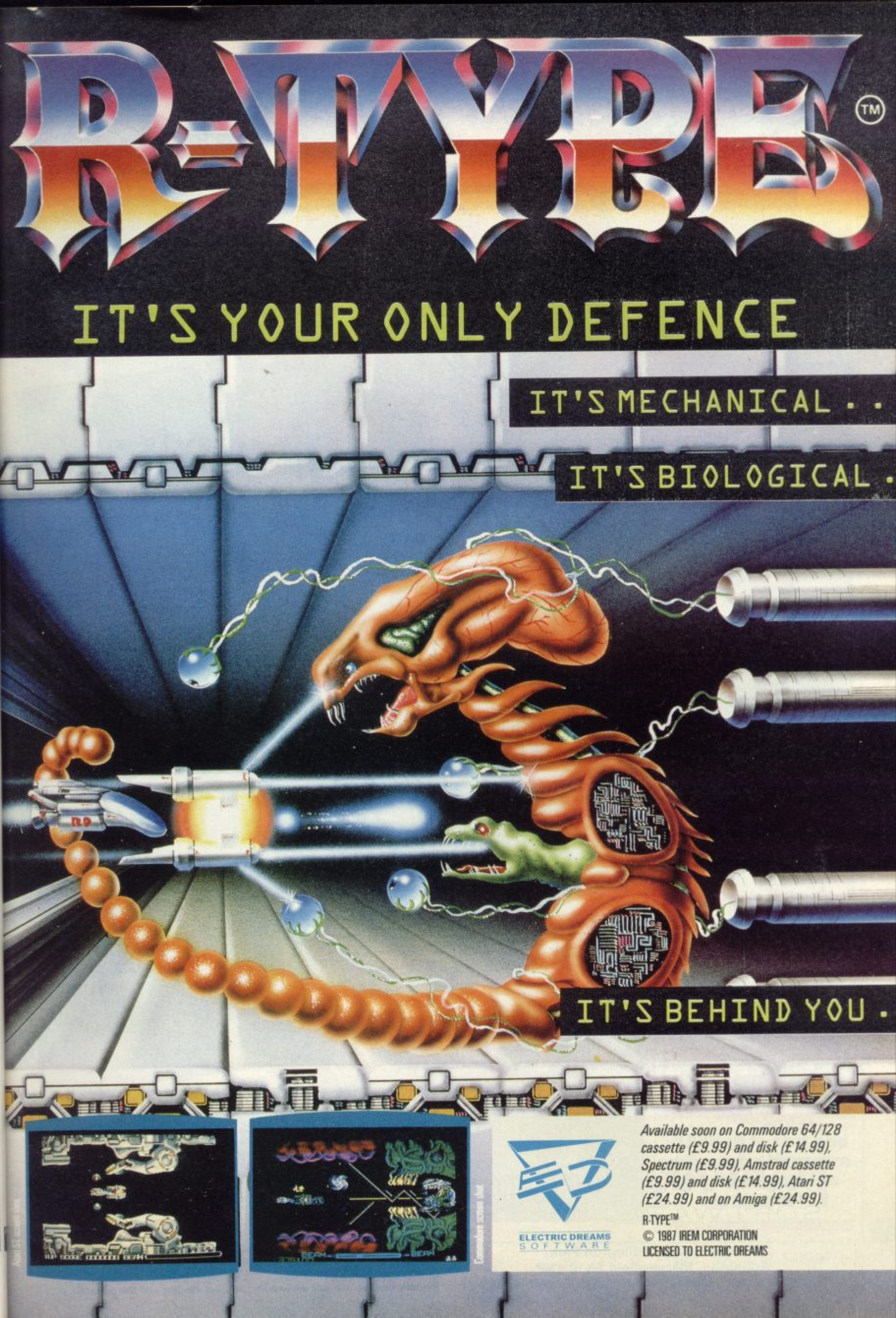
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A SMASHED HIT

DRUNKEN MASTER
Micro Media

Because no-one in the TGM office is proficient in Japanese, the plot of *Drunken Master* remains a mystery as the packaging has not yet been translated. It features a Bruce Lee lookalike as the hero and he's fighting his way across land – probably in the name of vermouth, just ice and the American dry.

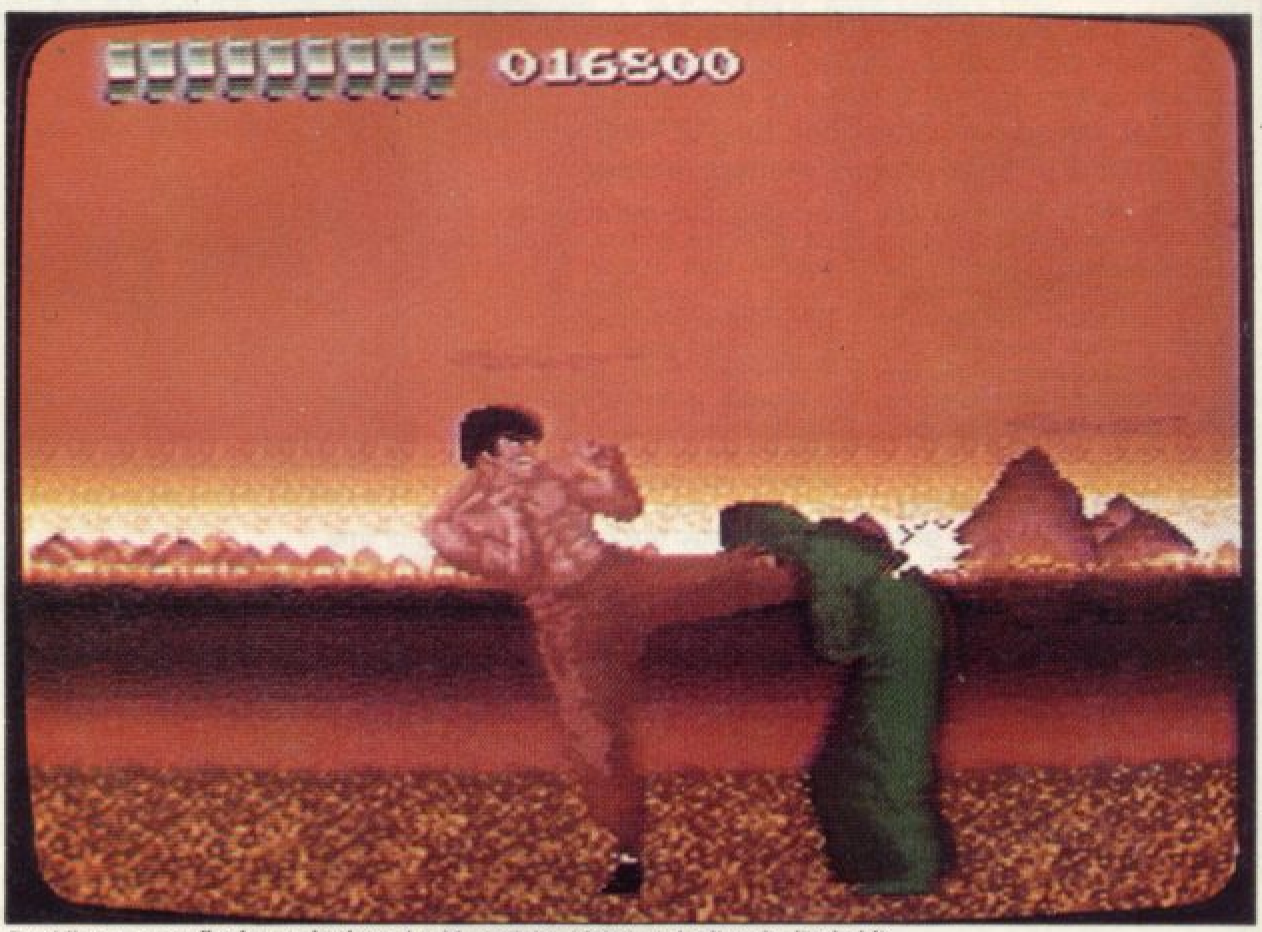
The Master of inebriation takes on all-comers, no martial arts game would be complete without several bad guys to bash the living daylights out of. Monks, snakes, birds and rocks are just some of the adversaries met - each requiring a precise punch or kick to kill. The enemy do not physically attack, but drain energy on contact – Mr Lee dies when all his energy has gone.

Japanese courage

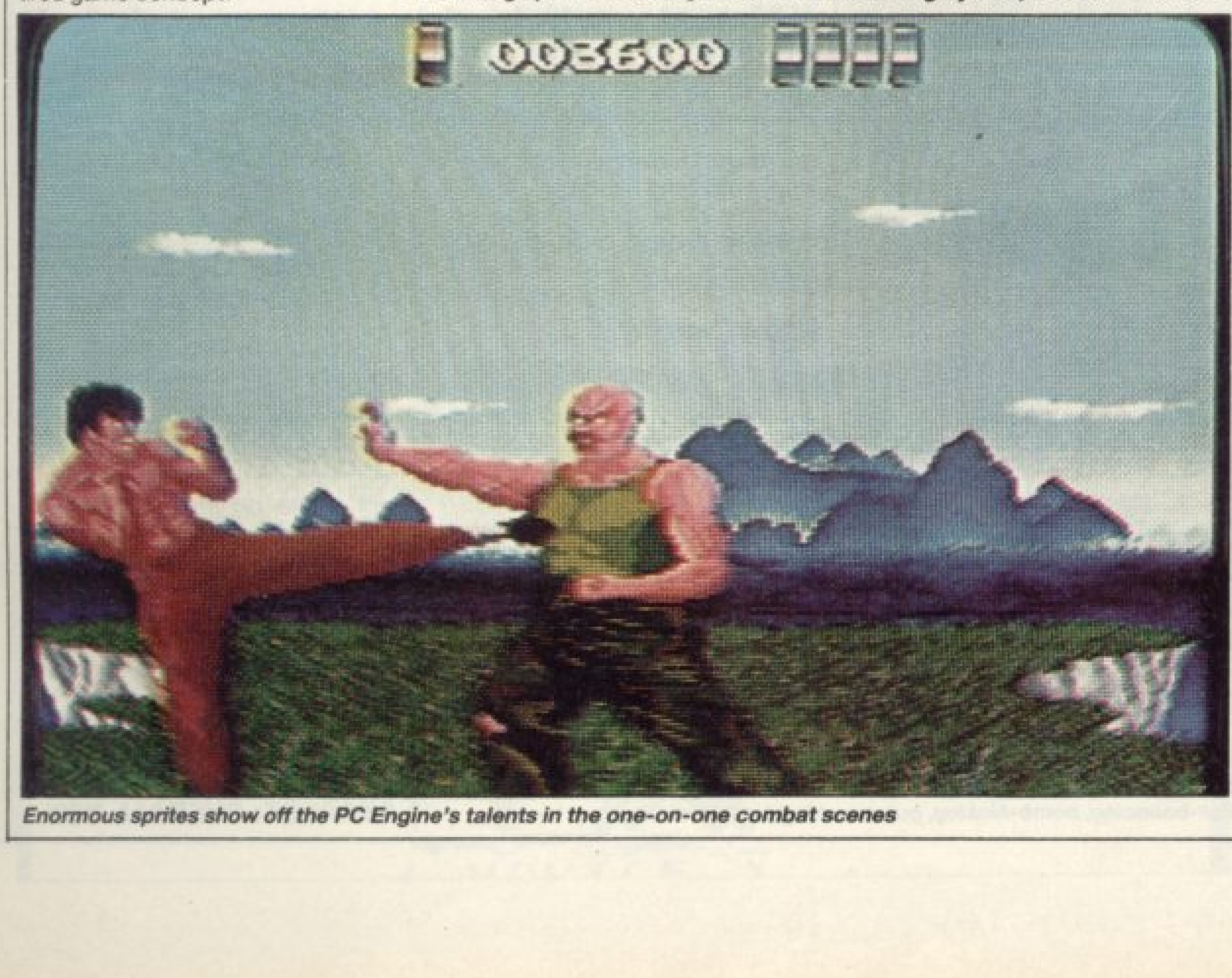
Before advancing to the next stage, an angry mega-opponent is defeated - punches or kicks to the face normally do the trick, but their counter-attacks get faster with each level.

Drunken Master is fairly standard fare and doesn't try to be original, which is disappointing. On the plus side, playability is good, thanks mainly to simple game-style. The action is fast and attack patterns are learnt to achieve progress.

Feelings of deja vu and repetition are prominent when playing *Drunken Master* – mainly due to the limited nature of the game and it making little progress towards improving what is a much used, tired game concept.



Doubling up an evil robe-garbed monk with a mighty kick, but don't make it a habit



Enormous sprites show off the PC Engine's talents in the one-on-one combat scenes

PC ENGINE
ROM Card: £24.99

Although sprites are detailed, colourful and the backdrops well defined (the fading in of the next levels colours is a neat effect) their size prevents good animation. A potentially great game but not even the PC Engine and its capabilities improve Drunken Master. **OK for martial arts enthusiasts, but nothing special.**

OVERALL 63%

"Action is fast and attack patterns are learnt to achieve progress"

The Games machine

STAR PLAYER

CAN HE FIGHT? SHURIKEN

SHINOBI

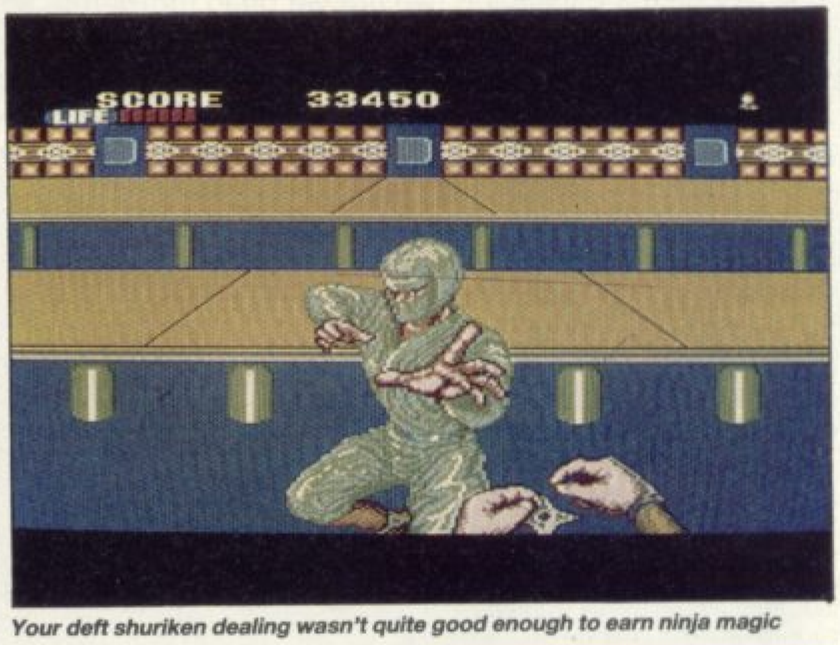
Mastertronic

S*hinobi* is another very close Sega conversion of its arcade big brother. Based on the much-exploited martial arts theme, it features Joe Musashi, Master Ninja, taking on the dreaded Ring of Five, a terrorist group holding children of world leaders hostage.

In a similar vein to *Kenseiden* and *Captain Silver*, *Shinobi* features the hero making his way through five horizontally scrolling levels – fighting terrorists and rescuing hostages. When freed, the children are kind enough to give Joe help in the form of better weapons, extra energy and access to a bonus round.

Nine ninjas leaping

For the bonus round the game switches to a 3-D view with Joe throwing shurikens at leaping ninjas. Miss one and he jumps down right in front of Joe to end the round. The reward for disposing of all the ninjas is 500 points and one of six ninja-magic spells. Their effects are varied but all prove invaluable in the right situation: they include metal binding magic which freezes all enemies on the screen, invincible magic that protects Joe from harm and flying squirrel magic which allows him to fly through the air for a short period of time.



Your deft shuriken dealing wasn't quite good enough to earn ninja magic

Inevitably the Ring of Five won't let you have it all your own way. At the end of each level, a Ring Warlord has to be defeated, each has his own attack pattern and a single weakness for Joe to find and exploit.

Shinobi is one of those games that does nothing for innovation but is well presented. Appeal lies in its immense playability and addictive qualities.



Joe Mushashi (bless you!), a gunman, a Mongo, and Marilyn Monroe. What more could you want?

SEGA
Two-Mega cartridge: £24.95

Flickering sprites are made up for by fast action, neat animation, loads of colour, good sound and plenty to do – Shinobi is almost worth buying a sega console for.

OVERALL 82%

"Almost worth buying a sega console for"

VERSION UPDATE

Martial law

IK+

System 3

Atari ST: £24.99

WITH a mighty thwack the smash C64 game hits the 68000 right in the interface. Archer Maclean's first venture into the world of 16-bit software enhances the original Andromeda Software program, *International Karate*, with sampled sound effects and extra fighting moves.

Fought against a peaceful oriental seascape, *IK+* includes the moves and style of play of the original, but also features a handy backward somersault, bone-grinding doublehead kick and a skull-smashing head butt.



Ball-bouncing, bomb-kicking, gut-punching fun for 16-bitters

On the slowest of the six speeds available the action is fast, on the fastest level matches can be fought and won before you know what's hit you.

Two bonus rounds have been incorporated, including one in which you deflect oncoming balls and bouncing heads with a shield. The other involves bombs which are kicked off-screen before they explode.

The original C64 game was almost perfect in gameplay with fast, frenetic action. The ST version is no different and just as much enjoyment is to be had from of bashing up other players.

Graphics, while similar to those of the C64, move well and the inclusion of intricate backdrops that feature birds flying, submarine periscopes surfacing, inchworms crawling, leaves falling and more, all add to the overall quality.

Buy it and get a real kick.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 88%

I DON'T GIVE A DAN

EXPLODING FIST +
Firebird

Way Of The Exploding Fist has the perhaps dubious pleasure of being the computer game which spawned the martial arts fad still raging today. Based on the hit coin-op *Karate Champ*, it was released way back in August 1985. Now the programmers, Beam Software, have updated it to fit the advanced challenge of today's games.

The extra challenge is in the form of another violent Oriental opponent, but the general aim of the game remains the same. Gradually developing your fighting skills, you face increasingly tough opponents to work through the dans – the proficiency levels of karate. Having reached the top – 10th dan – you defend your name against yet more combatants.

Two human players can take part in the C64 game, and three in the Spectrum.

Exploding Fist + has the standard plethora of fighting moves, accessed by joystick direction and fire/direction combinations. It also features two novel moves: a swift elbow into a lurking opponents ribs is one of the fastest moves you can make, while cartwheels move you speedily along the single-screen combat area.

A bout to begin
Bouts are played under a 30 second time limit, and the two players with the most hit points go on to the next fight. A hit point is awarded when a player lands a blow on another – and the bout automatically ends if a player earns maximum hits (6 on the C64, 8 on the Spectrum).

Human players get to indulge in a bonus round. On the C64, ninjas jump forward from an alley while the players hand is steered left and right to throw knifes at them. On the Spectrum, a cursor is used to direct shurikens into the cold bodies of sneaky demons.

Exploding Fist is very much intended to be a returning blow to System 3's *International Karate +*, (see below). Unfortunately, **Probe** have failed with a game that, although undeniably playable, is inferior in most respects – only the three players of the Spectrum version is an improvement. The bonus rounds are new but are inspired by other sources (the C64 one is from *Shinobi*) and do not disguise the plain fact that System 3's game is the better.

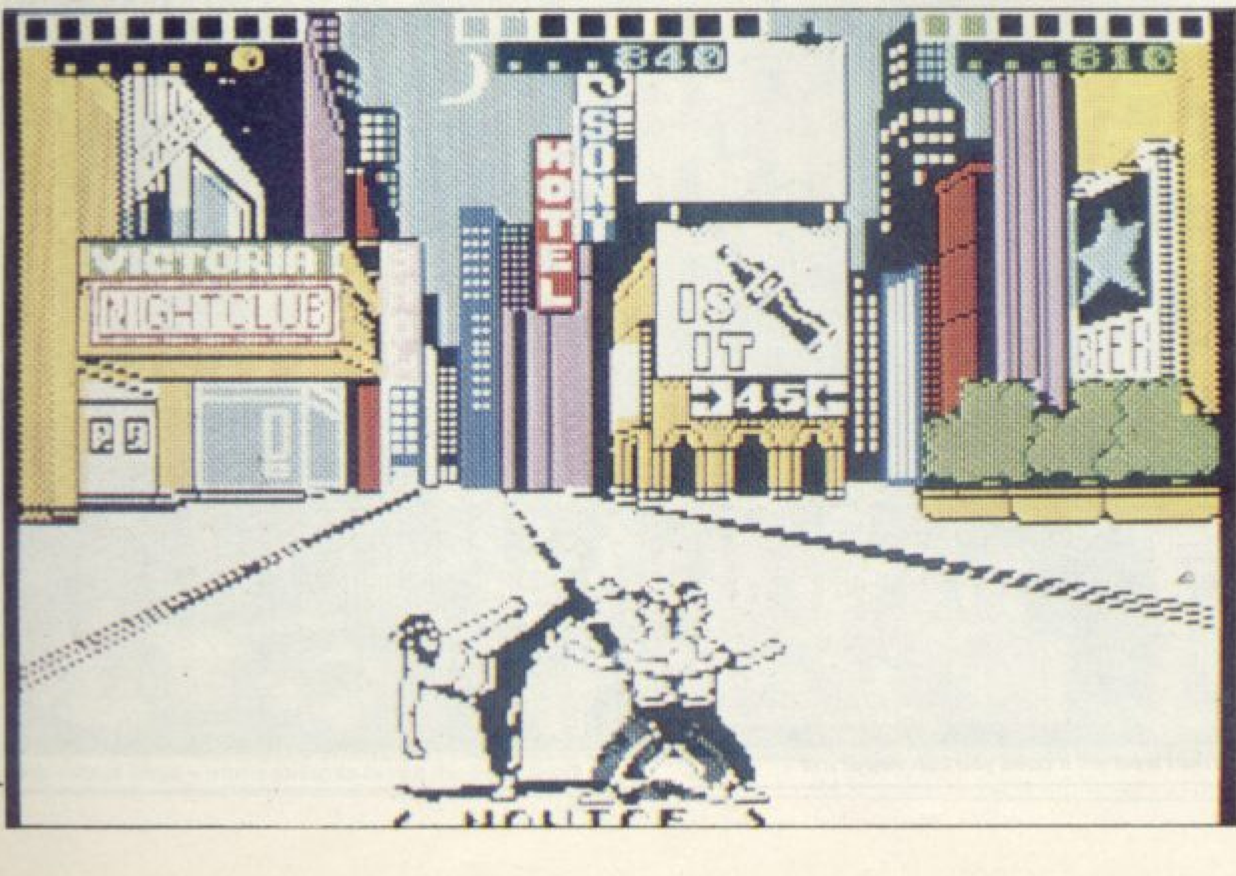
SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £7.99

Restricted by colour, the second and third skinny fighters are distinguishable by baseball cap and beard! They are swiftly and smoothly animated and clearly defined, and other than the about-turn move, react quickly to joystick or keys. Sound is a few white-noise pseudo-samples and an irritating title tune. The three player option makes this of interest to even those who already have a healthy martial arts game collection.

OVERALL 69%



Now make sure you smile as you smash his face in – C64 screen

Mind you don't split your trousers, your opponents might get a kick out of it – Spectrum screen


COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.99
Diskette: £12.99

Other than the green robes of the third player, sprites are the same as in the original, which today are showing their age. Their blockyness and ill-proportion is not helped by their increased speed, as animation has not been updated to match the swiftness. The grainy samples of Way Of The Exploding Fist **are present and sound very crude by todays standards. The plain sounds used in the music are a step down from those in the original.**

OVERALL 57%

OTHER FORMATS

None at present.

"A swift elbow into a lurking opponents ribs is one of the fastest moves you can make"

ARMAKUNI, WHAT ARE YOU?

LAST NINJA 2
System 3

The highly-acclaimed classic martial arts game, *The Last Ninja*, was released shortly before TGM's time, but was very well received in our sister magazine ZZAP!. After much anticipation, *Last Ninja 2* finally leaps onto the street. A limited edition version (20,000 copies) comes complete with Ninjitsu mask and plastic shuriken. The latter freebie is causing controversy in high streets (refer to this months TGM Report for the full story), but System 3's latest is sure to be greeted with open arms by games players.



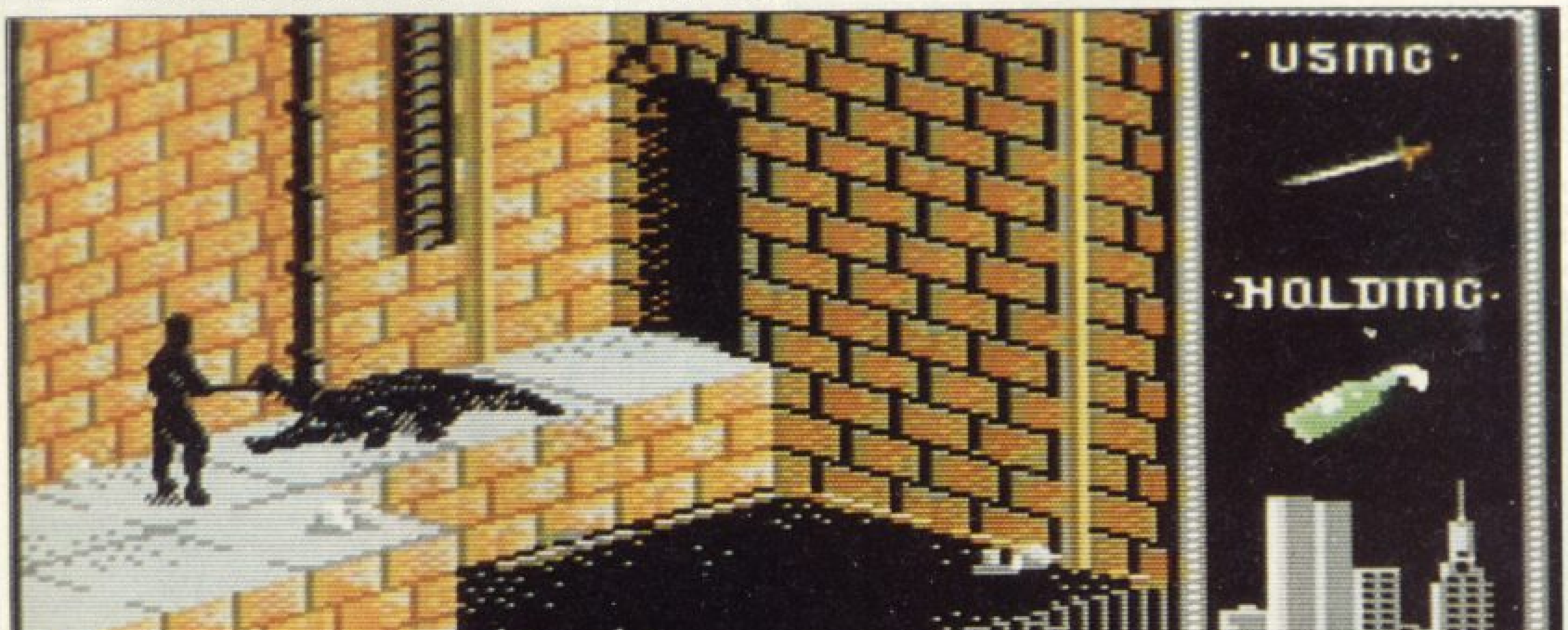
In times long passed, on the sacred island of Lin Fen, the last of the Ninja, Armakuni, defeated evil Shogun, Kunitoki. Unknown to our hero, Kunitoki gained a potent magic orb which allows him to control time.

More than a thousand years hence, Kunitoki is a powerful and corrupt New York business man. He uses the orb to influence all who dare cross him, even the city's police are on his side. He gains ever greater riches from extortion, prostitution, robbery, and his own opium factory.

In their wisdom, the ancient Ninja Gods have brought Armakuni to the 20th century to track down Kunitoki and defeat him once and for all. This is a far from easy task, as there are many of Kunitoki's minions trained in martial arts who fight to the death to defend their master.

Cause a Ninjary

Beginning at the bandstand in Central Park, you guide the Ninja in an isometric 3-D environment, picking up weapons with which to fight and aiming to complete sections within a time limit. Two



Yes, that's right, open wide. Now, this won't hurt a bit – if it does you can sewer me

The Games machine

TOP SCORE

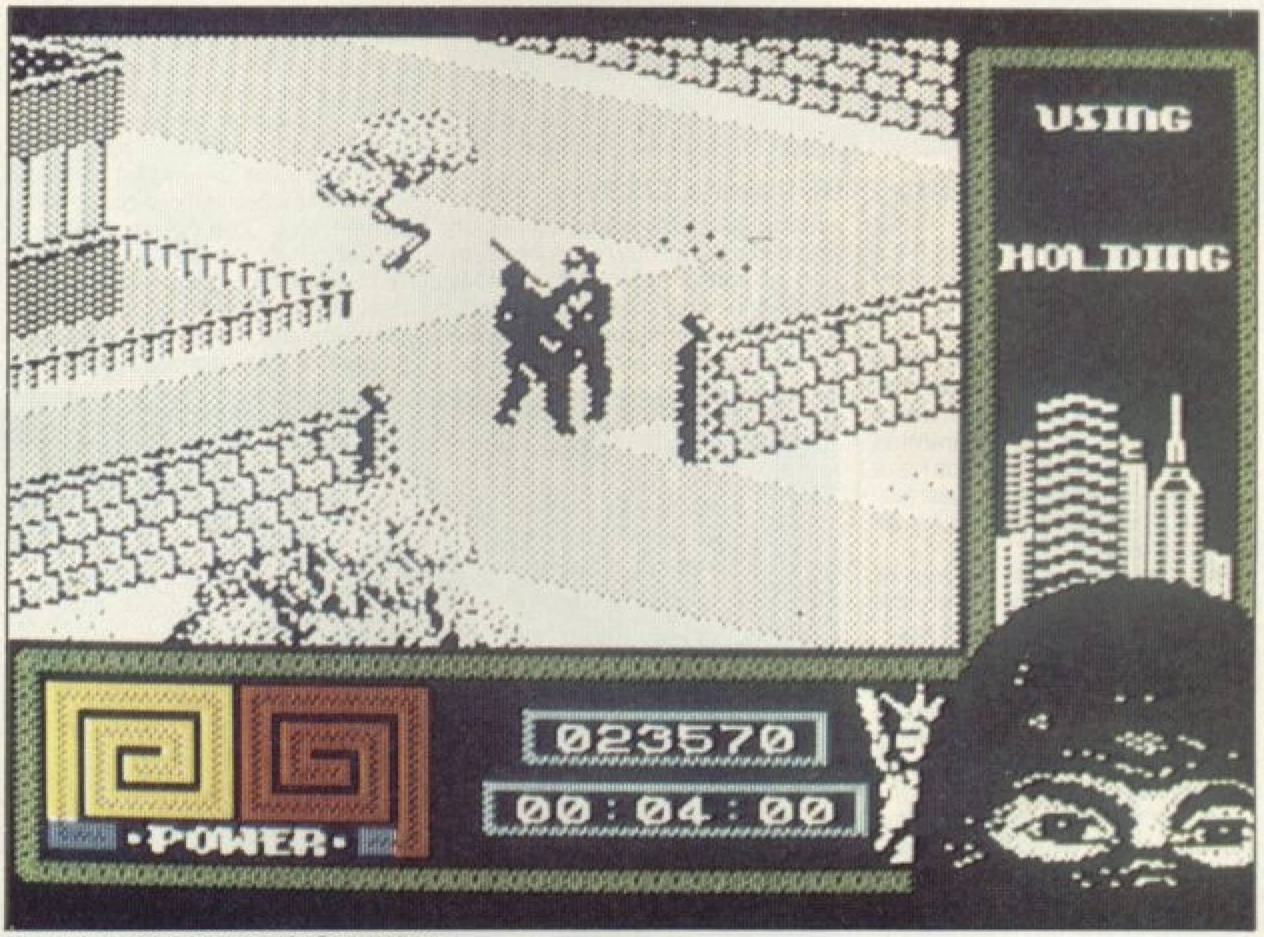
fighting moves are initially available. They increase when weapons such as shurikens, swords and nunchakus are used.

Two energy spirals display strength remaining, one for you and one for your opponent. as well as in combat, this is also worn down by leaping off tall buildings or being run over by passing vehicles – one of your five lives is lost when it is extinguished.

The game is played over six sections. After leaving Central Park, the streets of the Big Apple are explored, then the smelly depths of the sewers investigated until, finally, the opium factory is reached. At the top of this building a helicopter is caught to whisk you to the final confrontation on the Shogun's island.

The slightly slow play of The Last Ninja has been improved by a wider variety of scenery and characters, and the inclusion of object-orientated puzzles makes exploration a highly absorbing experience. Combat is a little limited and soon mastered, though the control system as a whole can be cumbersome at first.

Overall, *Last Ninja 2* would make an excellent addition to any arcade-adventurer's collection.



Grappling with a bent cop in Central Park

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £12.99
Diskette: £14.99

The remarkable graphics of the original have been improved on by artist, Hugh Riley. Backgrounds have lots of colour while retaining great detail to make convincing scenes. The sprites are of equal high quality, realistically animated to round off the impressive visuals. There are no sound effects but each section has its own pacy, well-written music to complement exciting gameplay.

OVERALL 93%

OTHER FORMATS

An Amstrad version is imminent (Cassette 12.99, Diskette £14.99). Amiga and ST versions are under development but will not be available for some time.

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £12.99
Diskette: £14.99

Play is difficult until the control system is mastered, but this doesn't hinder the fun too much. The play area is simple black on white, and although shading is basic in places, a lot of detail has been packed in – and the varied characters are nicely animated. Other than few spot effects, sound is a grating title tune which rapidly annoys.

OVERALL 89%



Ninja versus Ninja – who's going to break the pose first?

"The inclusion of object-orientated puzzles makes exploration a highly absorbing experience"

PRESS ANY KEY

VERSION UPDATE

STAR TREK
Firebird

Commodore 64/128: Cassette £9.99, Diskette: £12.99

FIRST announced in late 1986, *Star Trek* finally reaches the 8-bit market, following a moderately warm reception on the ST in February.

Kirk, Spock, Scotty and all the TV show favourites are aboard the Enterprise, exploring a sector of space known as the Quarantine Zone. Many Federation ships have entered this area over the past few months and the crews have all turned renegade.

The Klingons are at the foot of this, having discovered a crystal which, when connected to a powerful energy source, can be used to influence minds – a psimitter. James T Kirk and his crew have been given the job of investigating the Zone and putting the Klingons' mind device out of action.

You control all seven major crew members: the direction of Kirk, scientific advice of Spock, navigation skills of Sulu, weapons' targetting of Chekov, engine room control of Scotty, medical vigilance of McCoy, and communication administration of Uhura. They each have their own screens where decisions are made, figures altered and systems directed by use of a cursor.

Through star and system maps, the Enterprise is steered into orbit around planets, some of which can be beamed down to for collection of useful objects. Conflict is inevitable and requires speedy reactions to minimise Enterprise damage but few arcade skills.

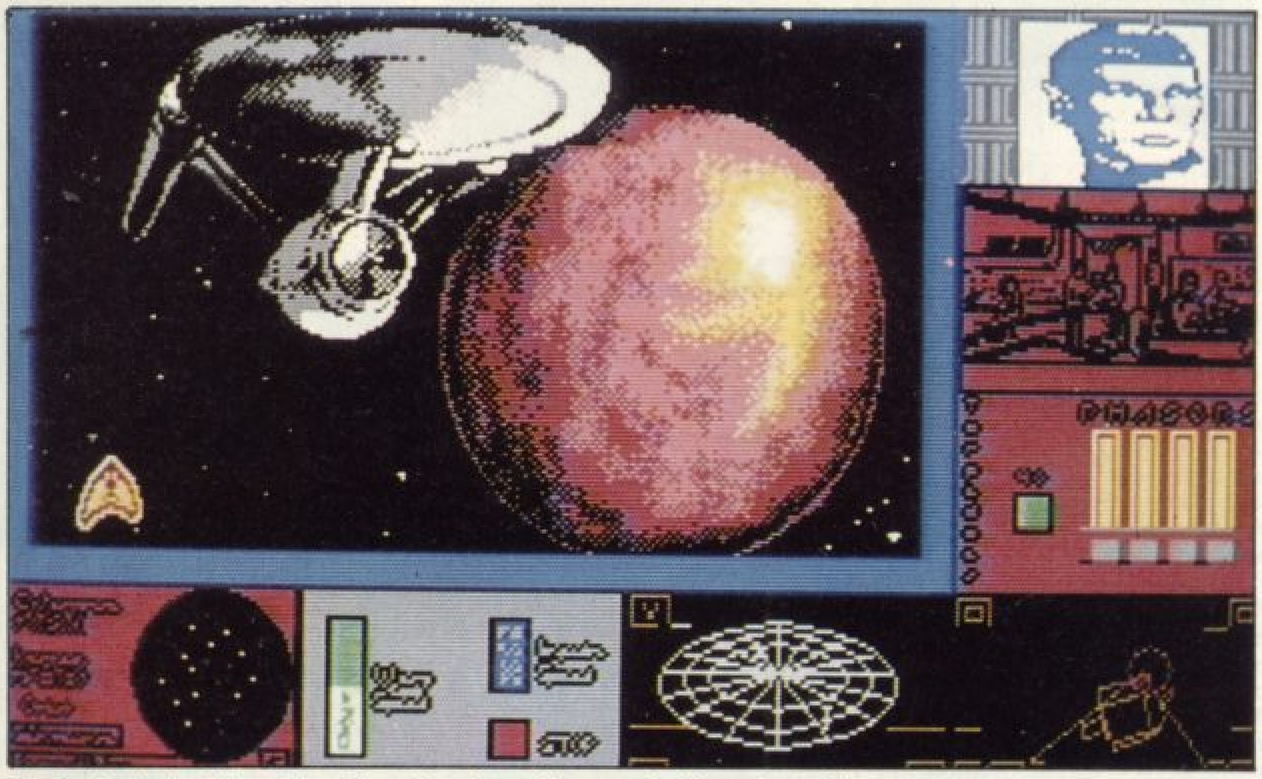
Gameplay is virtually unchanged from the ST original, giving you many solar systems to explore and eight ways to complete the game. Presentation is lowered by graphical simplicity; crew portraits are in two colours and are quite blocky at two-thirds screen size. The bridge graphic, showing all the crew, is quite crude, displaying figures as rough outlines. Adequate vector graphics are used in the animated navigation and combat screens.

Sound effects are few but suitably futuristic and a bouncy rendition of the theme tune introduces the game.

While simple game elements make up the game, the gradual discovery of new and unusual devices spur you on to the ultimate target of restoring order to the galaxy.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 69%

ATARI ST: TGM003 71%



Now in standard orbit captain – The enterprise and her crew battle against a Klingon takeover

VERSION UPDATE

WHERE TIME STOOD STILL
Ocean

Atari ST: £19.95

CREATED by Denton Designs, *Where Time Stood Still* is set atop the Himalayan mountain range, where a party of four people have survived the crash-landing of their light aircraft.

This niche of the world has been unchanged for many thousands of years and prehistoric creatures still rule.

Led by Jarret, the pilot, your group must find a path through the mountains to civilisation, while avoiding attack by primeval monsters.

Guiding the gun-wielding Jarret, a scrolling isometric landscape is explored. The other three characters – Clive, Gloria and Dirk – follow him but can easily get left behind, so progress should be gradual. The health and welfare of your companions is a prime concern and monitored by various bar graphs.

Objects, including food, are found on your travels and are picked up and used with a pop-up menu.

With numerous objects to manipulate, exploring the Himalayas is an interesting experience, but is unexpanded from the 128k Spectrum original.

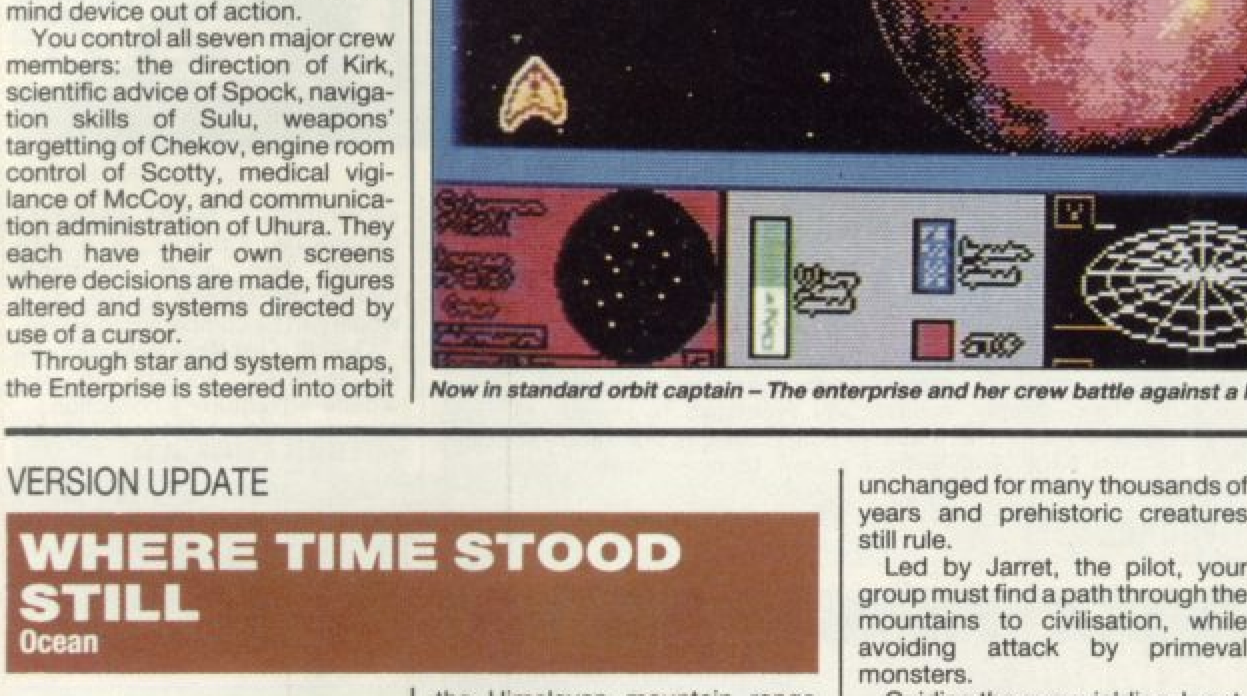
The playing area is monochrome, but uses several shades of grey to give the appearance of a '50s' movie. Some clever shading is used on landscape features but some characters are too curved and feature simple animation. The dramatic music is better than the sound effects option, which are little improvement on the Spectrum game.

A few bugs are present, such as incorrect messages and perspective collision detection, but they don't spoil gameplay too much – even though a clone Gloria appeared at one point!

A little more difficult to play than the original, *Where Time Stood Still* remains compelling, but too easy for today's 16-bit market.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 71%

SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM009 95%



Time and tide wait for no man – even when it stands still



Ready for Action!
HELLFIRE ATTACK
SHOOT-OUT
COMMODORE 64/128K CASSETTE
REX
"Rex is a brilliant combination of strategy, dexterity and shooting and it has that vital 'just one more go' quality which so many games lack nowadays."
YOUR SINCLAIR, DECEMBER
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ATARI ST	£19·99	—	—	●

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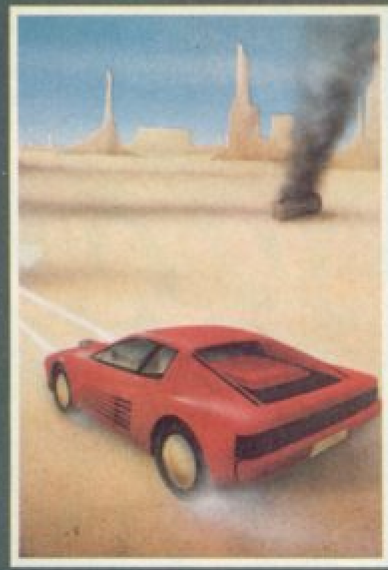


ROBBEARY
Bertie, an agile and clever bear has targeted a famous 24 floors store for his last and most daring ROBBERY. With no alarms or visible guards and fabulous treasures, yet it has been avoided like the plague by the criminal fraternity. Bertie soon discovers why?
AMIGA £19.95

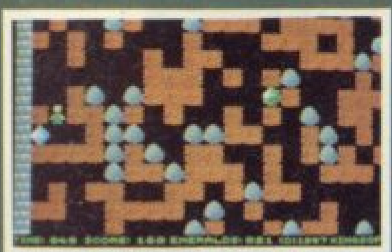


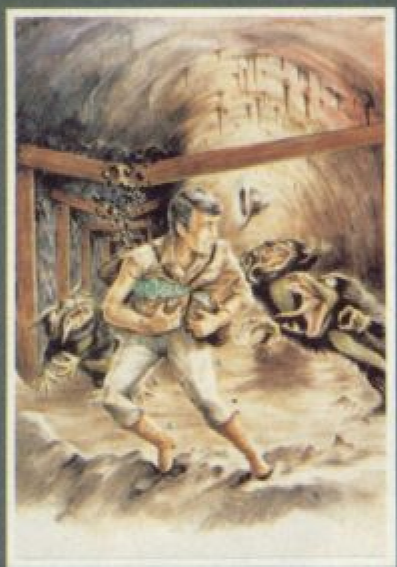
HIGHWAY HAWKS
Grand Prix driving skills is essential to negotiate the crowded highway at speed. Obliterate the assassins cars and the ones that get in your way but keep the tiger in your tank fed, the engine cool and the tyres and steering intact. Acquisition of faster cars and lethal weaponary depends on your driving and trading skills.
AMIGA £19.95 (2 DISCS)





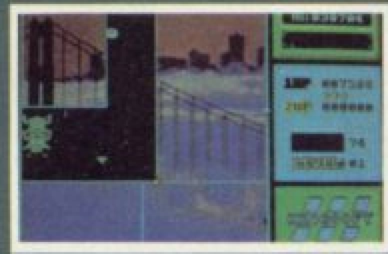
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A giant arcade adventure which has received rave reviews. Each level has its own unique solution and requires ingenuity and dexterity to complete. One player or two players TEAM action for added enjoyment.
AMIGA £14.95
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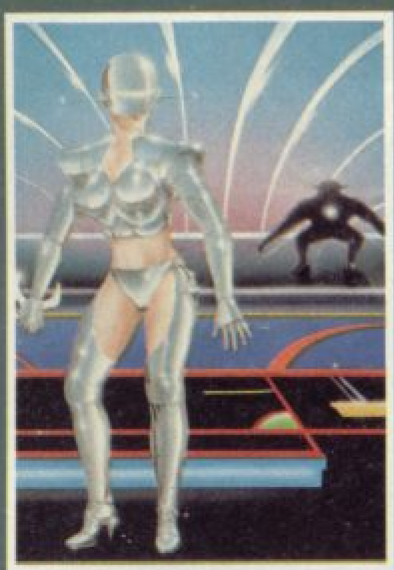
MANIAX
Maniax relentlessly pursued by the creature undertakes to clear the thick fog engulfing the world capitals. An addictive game requiring quick thinking and action.
AMIGA-ST-IBM £19.95
CBM64-PLUS 4 £7.95 (D) £9.95



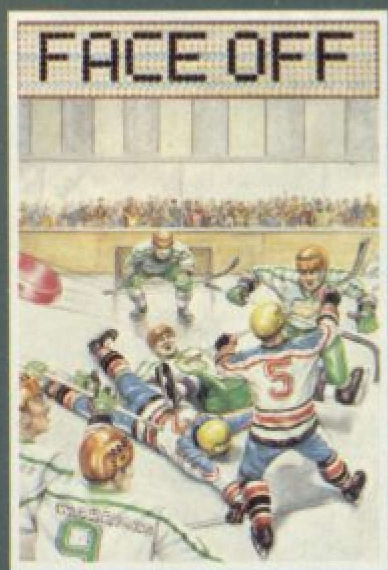


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I WILL PLAY THIS ONLY ONCE

TURBO CUP
Loriciels

High street stores have done it again. Because of its non-standard packaging, UK versions of *Turbo Cup* will be normal disk/cassette cases, rather than include the free toy Porsche of the continental versions. This is a model of the car sponsored by Loriciels for the 1988 Turbo Cup road race.

The Andros Turbo Cup has two major differences from other car races. Firstly, all competitors use the same type of car: a Porsche 944 Turbo. These are powered by 2.5 litre engines, providing 230 BHP and enabling acceleration from zero to 60 in 6.3 seconds. Normally 150 mph, with the additional 20 bhp provided by the turbo option, their top speed is a nippy 250 mph.

Secondly, through a series of heats, amateurs as well as experienced professionals can qualify to compete.

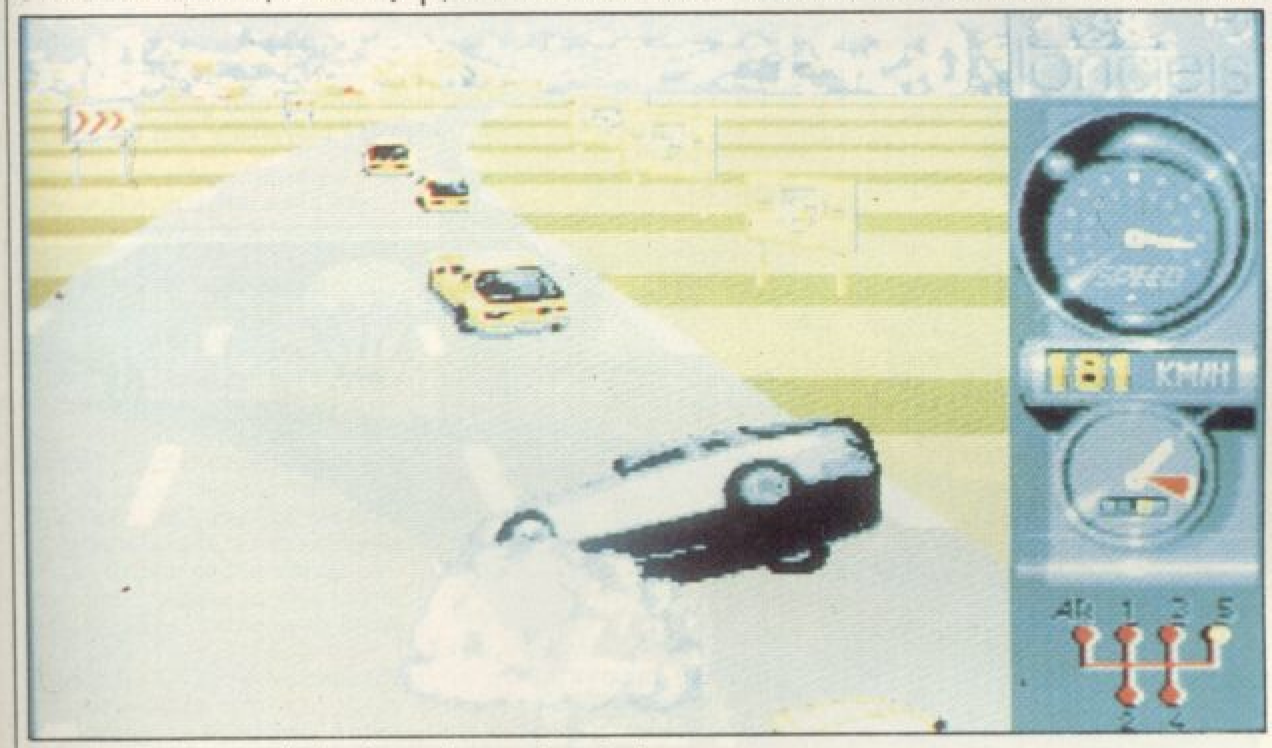
Rene Metge won last year's Turbo Cup but in the past has also won three Paris to Dakar rallies and a string of other victories. In *Turbo Cup*, you put yourself in his shoes, driving the Loriciels-sponsored Porsche in a competitive race.

Round the bend

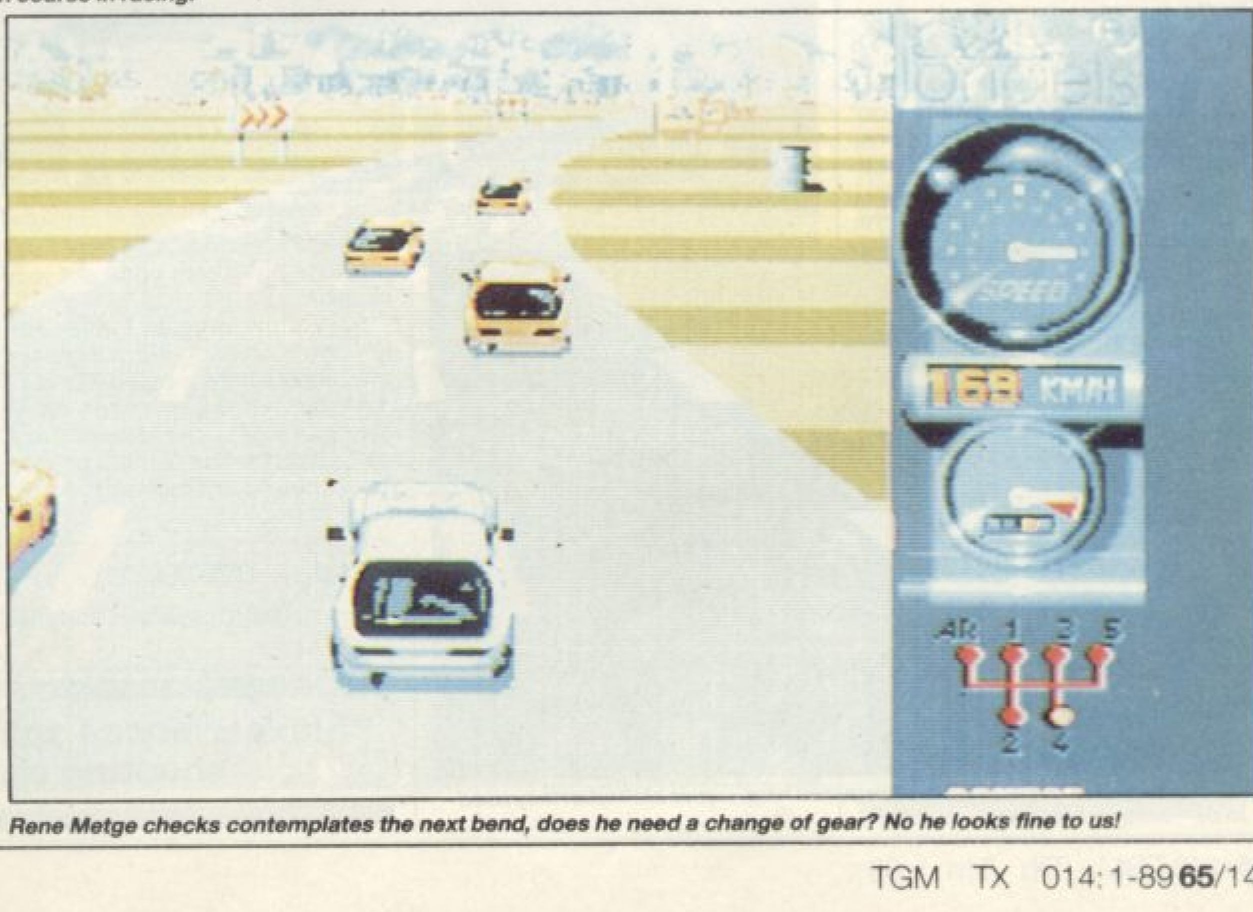
The track is chosen from four available – Magny to Cours, Dijou to Prenois, Nogaro and Paul Ricard – then the gear change method is selected. Gears can be automatic, selected from keyboard, a second joystick, or be used in professional mode where the fire button is held down as the clutch, and the 'stick moved to mimic a gear stick.

Presented with a view from behind the car, a practice lap is negotiated to determine your grid position. In the race, two laps of the tortous track are made while vying for position against several other drivers. Tracks have slopes as well as twisting bends which send you spinning, or if you're unlucky, flip your car on its back. Either mishap wastes precious time.

Turbo Cup has taken the slopes of *Out Run* and put them in a *Pole Position* format. This may seem a reasonable idea but none of these inclines are extreme and perspective/screen update make them largely unconvincing. The progressive scenery of *Out Run* would have injected life into the game, as speeding around undistinctive tracks race is outdated, even with slopes and skid-outs. The latter occur far too easily – the slightest touch from another competitor sends you spinning – and even with automatic gears, play is too difficult.



Damn French drivers – talk about a crash course in racing!



Rene Metge checks contemplates the next bend, does he need a change of gear? No he looks fine to us!

ATARI ST
£19.99

Generally simple roadside features (some of which you can drive through with no ill-affects) approach jerkily from the horizon as your nicely defined porsche speeds down a similarly juddery track. The depiction of slopes is uneffective and the roaring engine sound is an irritant. Some energetic competitive spirit is generated, but this type of race game is common, and has been better programmed.

OVERALL 54%

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga (£19.99), PC (£24.99), Commodore 64/128 and Amstrad CPC (Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99) and Spectrum 48/128 (Cassette £8.99, Diskette £12.99) are set for a December/New Year release.

"Tracks have slopes as well as twisting bends which send you spinning"

HERO VS HEROIN

ATARI ST
£19.95

Definitely the fastest of the bunch. Graphics are speedy and colourful, but the music is a touch annoying – there isn't even the Live and Let Die **theme. Very playable mainly due to its speed, unfortunately the waterways are very similar.**

OVERALL 73%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

More aesthetically pleasing than the C64 version this is the easiest to play – sound is passable.

OVERALL 69%

LIVE AND LET DIE
Domark

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

Graphics are very simplistic, slow moving and undetailed. Live and Let Die**'s lack of speed destroys playability and the game soon becomes boring**

OVERALL 64%

The ruthless Dr Kanaga is harvesting fields of poppies for the sole purpose of flooding the US with tons of free Heroin. Once the populace is hooked he can control the entire American drug market by charging whatever price he likes.

As agent 007 you must prevent Kanaga from doing this by destroying his Heroin processing plants. Unfortunately Kanaga has hidden the factories in remote parts of the Caribbean island, San Monique – accessible only via narrow waterways.

You guide James Bond's speedboat through the treacherous waterways as you undertake your mission to save the States. Kanaga has littered the route with seemingly impassable obstacles: mines, rocks and gun emplacements. He has also turned out his personal army – helicopters, planes, submarines and boats – to stop you.



Helicopters come in friendly and hostile forms – mind where you're blasting – ST screen

My word is my name

Your speedboat is armed with a machine gun and missile launcher. Ammo is no problem for the gun but the launcher only contains limited stocks of missiles, fuel is another consideration. Helpfully, supply barrels containing both are dropped periodically by CIA planes – pick them up to aid your mission.

As You progresses further into Kanaga's domain, the waterways get increasingly more difficult to navigate. Inexperienced spies may practise target shooting and navigation on one of three training levels before attempting the mission proper.

Live and Let Die is another game in the *RoadBlasters* mould. Other than speedboats there is nothing to link the game to the film whatsoever: no voodoo element, car chases or hungry alligators. Fans of *Overlander* and *RoadBlasters* may enjoy *Live and Let Die* and the three practise levels provide alternative waterways to explore for a while.



Looks like a bit of target practice is required here – spies ain't what they used to be – Amstrad screen

OTHER FORMATS

Spectrum (Cassette £9.95, Diskette £12.95) and Amiga (£19.95) soon

> **"Inexperienced spies can practise target shooting and navigation"**

STRIKE BACK AT THE EMPIRE

R-TYPE II
Micro Media

PC ENGINE
ROM Card: £

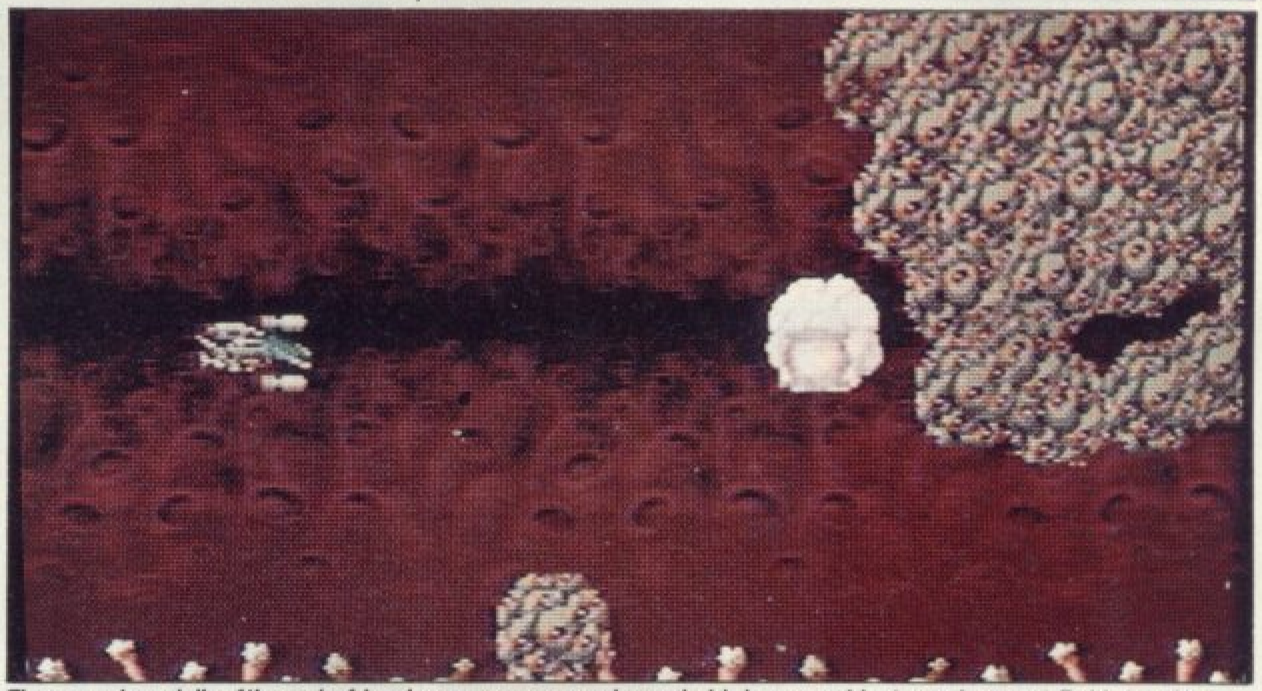
Featuring arcade-quality graphics and sound, this incredible shoot-'em-up is only let down by its overwhelming difficulty – and the small and ultimately fiddly control pad doesn't help a lot (Micro Media are working to release a joystick for the Engine in the near future). The play area is slightly smaller than the coin-op, hence slight vertical scrolling comes into effect.

OVERALL 83%

The Bydo Empire thought it could relax following the carnage of the first R-Type wars. In that conflict, Bydo forces were decimated by a lone spaceship. The Empire's chance to recover was very short-lived, for with a blinding flash, the R-9 spaceship returns. Looking mean and armed to the teeth, it's intent on finishing the job it started.

Ignoring the social and political implications of total destruction, the R-9 fighter progresses through each of the levels taking on and destroying bigger, badder and graphically better enemies.

End-of-level opponents of increasing toughness and unique attack patterns are confronted: a giant spaceship covered in sponge like asteroids and a monster nestling within alien bowels are two of the delights awaiting those deft enough to reach them.



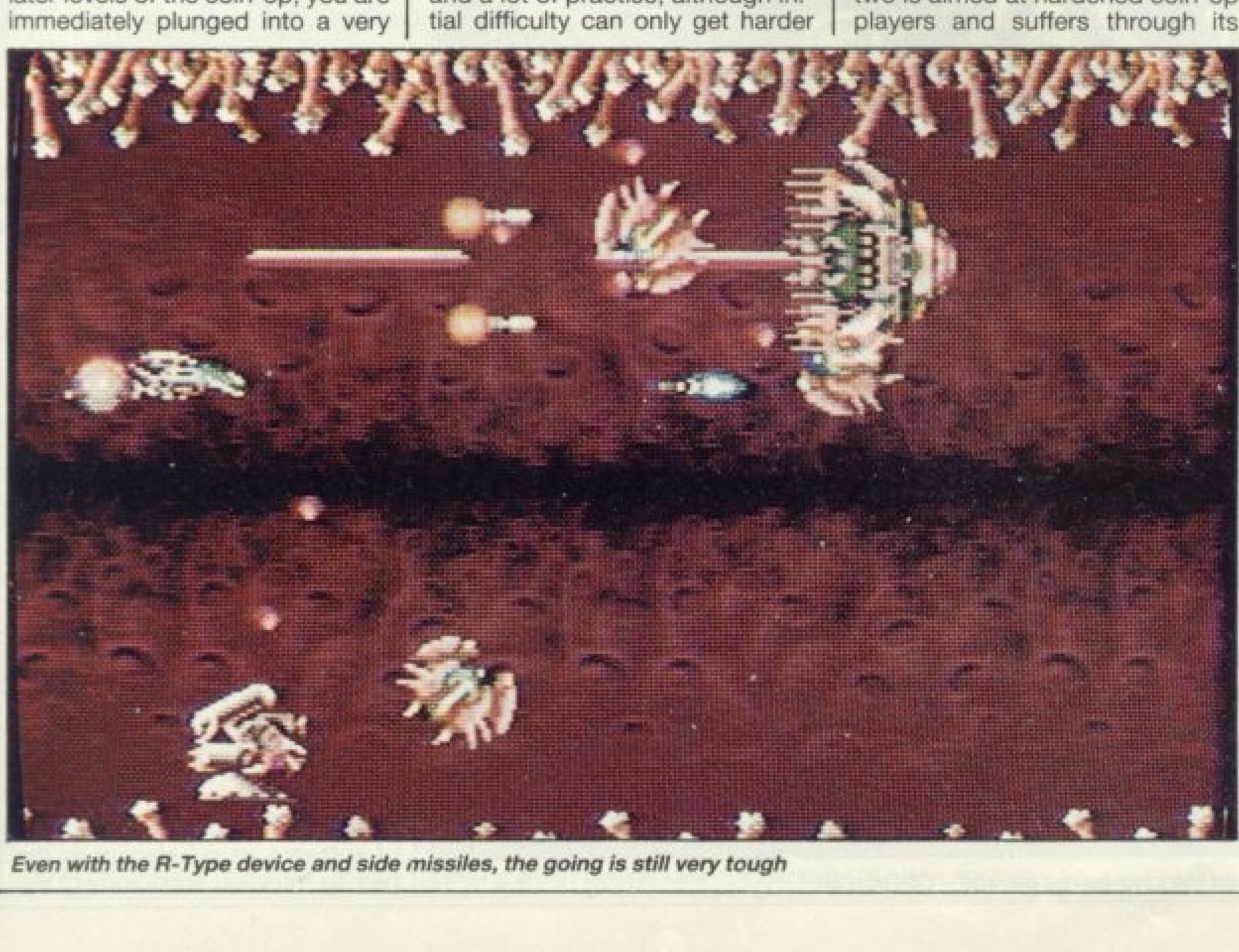
The amorphous jelly of the end-of-level-enemy, a scene only reachable by our resident arcade expert, Robin 'mad scientist' Hogg

Tough stuff

Multiple weapons to collect include speed-ups, homing missiles, bouncing lasers, flamethrowers and a variable strength R-Type laser. Nothing has been ommitted for this conversion, those who've played the coin-op should recognise the attack patterns and perhaps survive longer than the TGM review team (thirty seconds!).

Because *R-Type II* features the later levels of the coin-op, you are immediately plunged into a very difficult game. Progress can only be made through perseverance and a lot of practise, although initial difficulty can only get harder and ultimately bring frustration. Unlike the original *R-Type*, part two is aimed at hardened coin-op players and suffers through its difficulty.

On the other hand if you're competent at arcade games, don't have any second thoughts about *R-Type II*. Why play the coin-op when you can experience the thrill of annihalating the Bydo Empire in the comfort of your own home?



Even with the R-Type device and side missiles, the going is still very tough

PC ENGINE
ROM Card: £24.99

Featuring arcade-quality graphics and sound, this incredible shoot-'em-up is only let down by its overwhelming difficulty – the small and ultimately fiddly control pad doesn't help a lot (Micro Media are working to release a joystick for the Engine in the near future). The play area is slightly smaller than the coin-op, hence slight vertical scrolling comes into effect.

OVERALL 83%

"Aimed at hardened coin-op players"

ONE AXE STREAM TO ANOTHER

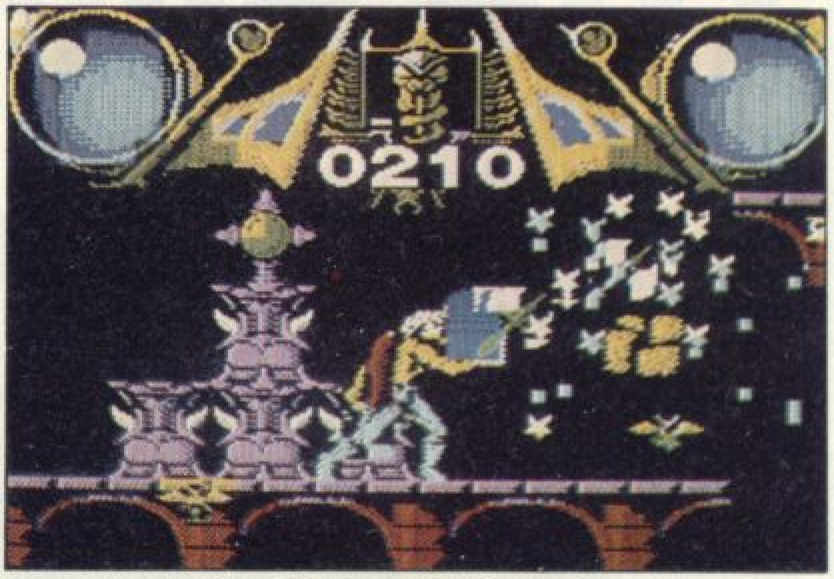
SAVAGE
Firebird

Advertisements for this game use a Firebird in-house hero: a youthful Proclaimer lookalike transformed into an Arnold Schwarzenegger hunk in the space of two pages. It wasn't a can of spinach which made this magical muscle metamorphosis possible, but a hefty joystick workout with *Savage*.

Savage certainly lives up to his name and the title of 'supreme fighting machine'. He has long flowing hair, wears little clothing, and wields a razor-sharp axe with wild fury. And in this case, who can blame him, for his beloved maiden has been captured by monstrous Guardians.

The fight for freedom is spread through three distinct, individually-loaded stages. The first takes place in a left/right-scrolling castle infested with demons, bats, giant spiders and many other vile creatures.

A stream of axes is fired to despatch them, whereupon icons are often left behind. These give bonus points, extra weapons, and replace energy lost. Large enemies, requiring several hits to be killed, appear at regular intervals through the stage.



Remarkably colourful combat in part one of Savage – Spectrum







Sparks fly as the man-in-the-moon takes on the long-haired Savage – C64 screen

How mean was my valley

Once outside the castle, Savage has to escape the surrounding area of death valley – a place filled with ghosts, skulls and monoliths whose only purpose in death is to thwart his mission. As Savage speeds along, enemies approach in first-person 3-D perspective. Spinning stars are thrown to eliminate vulnerable enemies but monoliths should be avoided.

Partway across the valley, Savage realises he was tricked and his maiden is actually back in the castle. Returning there, his way is barred by a locked entrance. In his stead, an eagle is sent forth to explore the multi-direction scrolling castle in search of the girl. Not only are there foul monsters within but also booby-traps, poisonous water and sharp spikes. Spitting fireballs as it goes, magical energy for Savage is collected by the great bird of prey.

Firebird have aimed for a piece of software as substantial as the heavily muscled schoolboy of the

ads – seperate loads for each distinctive stage allow large, detailed playing areas.

The three stages are based on tried and tested designs, with gameplay nicely balanced between playability and difficulty. Stages two and three may be played without entering a password, leaving you to battle with only a single life, but ensuring you see the whole lively package.

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.99
Diskette: £12.99

The introduction screen has some fantastic music, strewn with samples sequenced to produce a suitably energetic piece. In-game music spurs you on through atmospherically shaded backgrounds to worryingly fast 3-D. Sprites are colourful, if indistinct at times, and the smoothly animated Savage is a little dull and blocky.

OVERALL 74%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £8.99
Diskette: £14.99

Close to the C64 in stages two and three, this features the best looking first section. Colourfully shaded characters lend an almost cartoon-like feel to gameplay. A nice touch is the violent tremors of the castle floor when large monsters jump up and down. The 3-D section is very colourful and slick – marginally the best 8-bit version.

OVERALL 75%

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £8.99

There is a tremendous amount of colour, for the Spectrum – Savage himself features four. Clash is predictably present and the action is made sometimes indistinct due to the many detailed enemies. A single touch from a large enemy in stage one loses a life, and all assailants resist energy better than in the C64 game, making it more difficult to complete.

OVERALL 72%

OTHER FORMATS

Atari ST, Amiga and PC versions (all £19.99) should be ready before Christmas (1988).

"Seperate loads for each distinctive stage allow large, detailed playing areas"



A fat bouncing demon makes the very walls of the castle shudder – Amstrad screen

VERSION UPDATE

Rogue

FLYING SHARK
Firebird

Atari ST: £24.95

IN near kamikaze fashion, a lone fighter pilot sets off in an ancient biplane to take on the entire Japanese airforce. Tanks, anti-aircraft guns, battleships and squadrons of biplanes all fly in wait to end your mission.

Survival isn't easy, but with bonus weapons collected by shooting down squadrons of gold planes, and a highly effective smart bomb to use, the odds aren't all against you. At least not for the first twenty seconds . . .

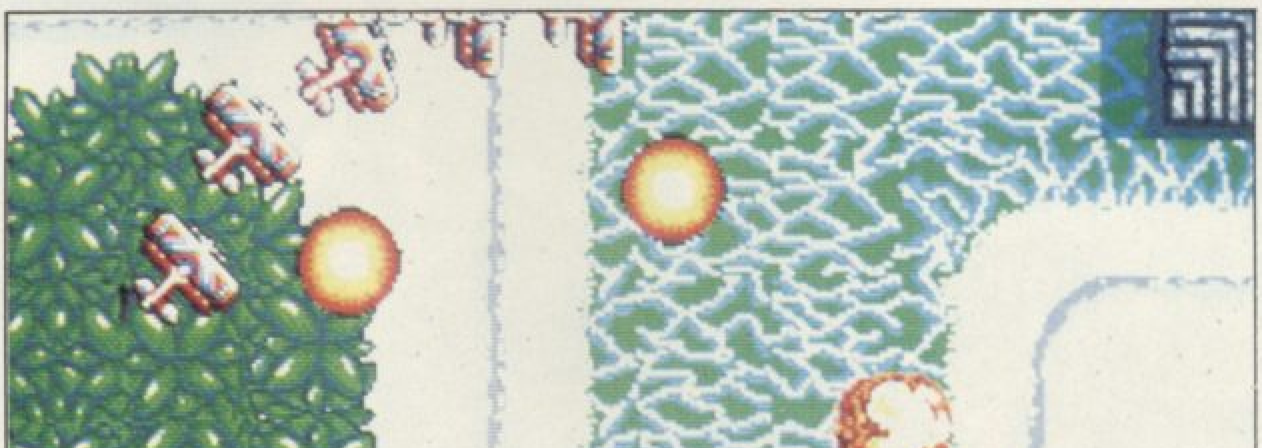
ST sound is not very good and each level is loaded seperately, but everything else is as near as could be to the coin-op, right down to attack patterns, enemies and types of collectable weapon.

The ever-so-slight screen judder as the backdrop scrolls is almost unnoticeable – you've little time to admire the scenery anyway as staying alive requires your full attention.

Flying Shark's unoriginality may not find favour with everyone, but if you're looking for the closest conversion yet of a simple but totally addictive coin-op, this is it.

ATARI ST: OVERALL 84%

SPECTRUM 48/128: TGM003 83%
COMMODORE 64/128: TGM003 74%
AMSTRAD CPC: TGM004 80%



Spinning smart bombs take out spiralling bi-plane enemies

"ABSOLUTE CO



TIGER ROAD™ An ancient tale from ancient China ... birthplace of martial arts disciplines. As Lee Wong you must halt the savagery of ruthless Ryu Ken Oh by overcoming flying Ninja warriors, awesome dragons and acrobatic Sumo wrestlers to name but a few. You'll need all your martial arts training and skill with the spear, chains and sickle to seek out and defeat Ryn Ken Oh in a furious and bloody battle with the scourge of the Orient.

CBM 64/128 £9.99t £14.99d · Atari ST £19.99d · Spectrum 48/128K £8.99t £12.99d
Amiga £24.99d · (Tiger Road £19.99) · Amstrad CPC £9.99t £14.99d

PLAYING A BOAT

OFF SHORE WARRIOR
Titus

Future Earth, inhabitants are bored with life and long for aggressive sport. Tension has been generated by the Extra-Terrestrial Pacifists, who control the planet and whose peace doctrine has ended all war and violence.

Off Shore Warriors formed to strike a blow – literally – for blood-thirsty 'humanity'. The world's largest lakes become arenas where competitors steer powerful speedboats around courses marked by buoys and jagged rocks. The boats are armed with missiles, to blow away anyone who gets too irritating.

You, after years of anticipation, have become a Warrior. A series of courses lie ahead, and a number of fiersome opponents. Your only perogative – apart from staying alive – is to finish each race in either of the top two positions.

Water way to go
Off Shore Warrior uses standard racing game steering and speed control convention – plus fire to launch a potentially deadly missile. Only a limited number are available so they should be used sparingly. Contact with a rock or another boat destroys your craft, and valuable time is wasted as the reincarnated vessel gains speed.

Off Shore Warrior's simple, flat left/right tracks are uninteresting in these days of junctions and hills. Hitting a target is awkward as your boat fires missiles from alternate launchers on either side of the hull, making aiming often inaccurate.

With only buoys, rocks, and stupidly regular and parallel two-tone wave patterns, the feeling of movement is limited and courses soon become boring. For gamers who want simple fast blasting, *Off Shore Warrior* offers a few hours of fun.

ATARI ST
£19.99

Annoying hiss backs the title sample, but sound effects are clean. Close to the Amiga in graphic definition, the coloured bars which simulate movement move backwards when going at full speed – a mildly ridiculous spectacle in an intentionally direct game.

OVERALL 45%

AMIGA
£24.99

A colourful and well-drawn speedboat on the title screen is backed by a brilliant, funky, jazz, sampled tune which is a real treat for the ears. Its noiselessness is in common with the predictable samples of the game. Visually adequate stills introduce each course. Scenery and object graphics are colourful and cleanly defined, but lacking in animation frames.

OVERALL 47%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £9.99
Diskette: £14.99

Almost as colourful as the popular 16-bits – graphics are highly detailed. The sound of the engine at full throttle is more annoying than on other formats, but is often unnoticeable due to the high speed at which the game moves. The pace increases playability and makes this a reasonable 8-bit conversion.

OVERALL 50%



A peaceful view from the shore – ST screen

PC
£24.99

The EGA was used on the title screen but not in the game, reducing it to the usual purple and blue of CGA. The 'waves' fade into the distance to give a feeling of depth (pun intended), but when you're moving they produce a strange rippling effect. Other than standard PC FX, the title tune, though distorted and faint, is at least sampled.

OVERALL 48%

OTHER FORMATS

Imminent Spectrum 48/128 (Cassette £9.99) and Commodore 64 (Cassette £9.99, Diskette £14.99) versions should cause few ripples.

"For gamers who want simple fast blasting, Off Shore Warrior **offers a few hours of fun"**

WANDERING IN WONDER

TIMES OF LORE
MicroProse

Licensed by MicroProse, **Origin** games are strategic in nature and, for role playing in the world of sword and sorcery, their *Ultima* series is second to none. The seriousness and simplicity of presentation featured in the tales of Britannia have been given a facelift: *Times Of Lore* is an icon-controlled arcade adventure with quality graphics and sound reaching a new **Origin** high.

Tales tell of Albareth, a Kingdom wrought with chaos until the arrival of the Eldens. This over-seas tribe gradually gained the peoples respect and took control. An Elden prince became High King of Albareth and ruled with the aid of three magical artifacts. The Tablet of Truth, the Foretelling Stones and the Medallion of Power. However, the Medallion may only be worn by one worthy of rulership; a descendant of High King Strebor.

A ten-year war was fought against invading Barbarians, neither side gaining an advantage, despite the Medallion's power. Valwyn, the High King, negotiated with Heidric, the Barbarian leader, and agreed to give them the south-eastern town of Ganestor if the Barbarians were faithful to the throne.

Eventually Valwyn grew weary of leadership and took the Medallion and his child to his distant homeland. He left Dariel, the Elden lord, to rule and promised he would return in 20 years. Meanwhile, Elden lords who disagreed with Valwyn's decision to give the Barbarians the land launched an attack on them in Ganestor. The high lords did not accept Dariel's rule, and fearing for his life, he let the kingdom fall once again into chaos. Criminals surfaced and orcs began to roam Albareth.

Lonely as a cloud

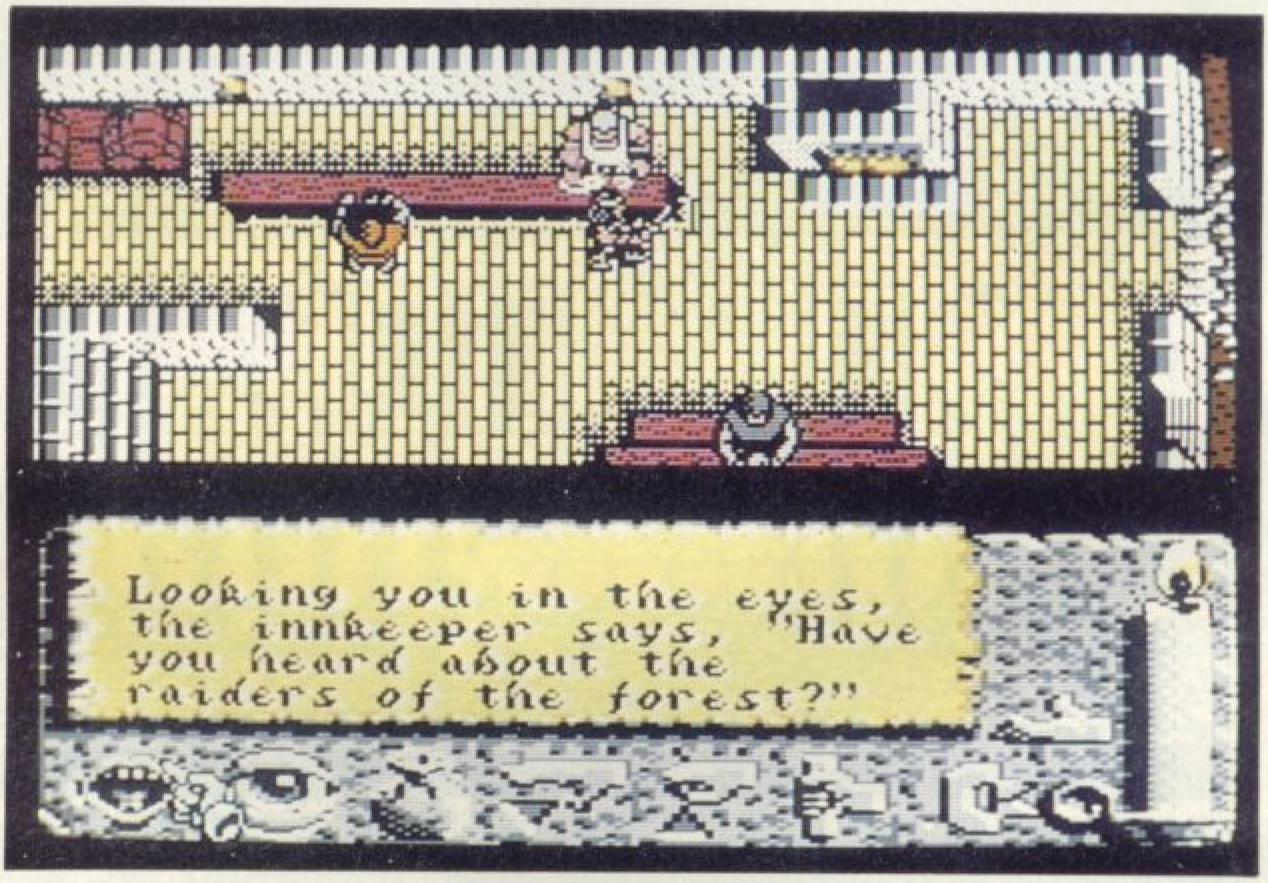
This is where you come in. After some very attractive introductory screens, you choose a character: an armoured knight, an agile Valkyrie, or a heavily muscled barbarian. You are then shown a plan view of yourself on the upper floor of the Frothing Slosh Tavern, about to begin your quest to find Valwyn.

While combat and movement are easily controlled by joystick, other actions are made by using a panel of icons. Objects are examined, taken, dropped, used and offered. Talk plays a major role in the game, and requires the use of menus. Chitchat is engaged in and questions about relevant subjects asked.

Times Of Lore is made up of 13,000 screen locations, which, whilst only half a screen in height, gives an idea of the huge playing area. As is common with such a statement, many areas are made from repeated graphic features with sprites wandering upon them – useful locations have to be tracked down.

Combat is frequent and soon becomes a chore, while the talk option is a good development from that used in *Ultima*, and very important to the completion of the game.

Though certainly above average, *Times Of Lore* requires a lot of patience to make progress.



Drinking already?! You've only just got up!



In times of old, when knights were bold – this guy's all male, chain mail

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

Introductory screens feature some well-drawn stills backed by atmospheric pieces of music by Martin Galway. During play, sound is reduced to a few quality spot effects and colourful background features become repetitive as they scroll jerkily by. Sprites are a mixture of detailed and indistinct characters, but all have pleasant, if unremarkable, animation.

OVERALL 73%

OTHER FORMATS

Spectrum 48/128 and Amstrad CPC are imminent (Cassette £9.95, Diskette £14.95), with ST and Amiga formats to follow in January (£24.95).

"Combat and movement are easily controlled by joystick, other actions are made by using a panel of icons"

CAPTAIN SILVER
Mastertronic

One-Mega cartridge: £24.95

BASED on an obscure Data East coin-op, *Captain Silver* is set on the high seas, when pirates ruled the waves and the currency was pieces of eight.

As a lowly seaman, with a nifty line in swordplay, you're on the hunt for treasure – the long lost hoard of Captain Silver to be precise!

From the humble beginnings of Bassend Town, you set off with sword in hand to find the loot. The town is a busy place and with prowling bears and killer cats to avoid there's no shortage of sword practice to indulge in. When killed, creatures leave letters behind, collecting them to make the words CAPTAIN SILVER awards you an extra life.

Fairies are also collected, enabling you to throw stars at the enemy - the more fairies collected the greater your fire power. Stopping off at shops is a good idea if you want to buy more extras to help defeat the many enemies faced.

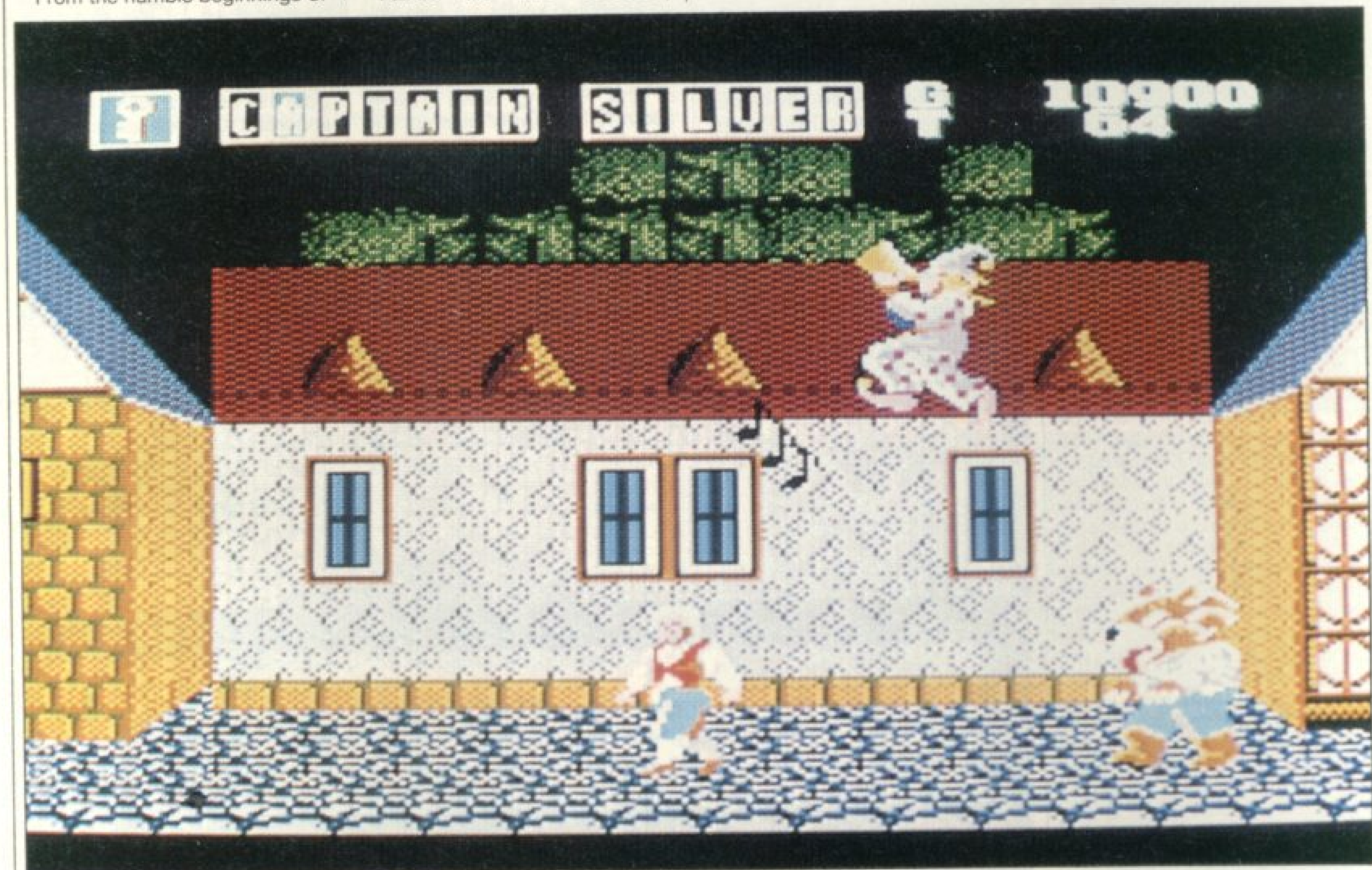
Moving from the town to a pirate ship, you battle pirates, collecting gold and letters as you go. Captain Silver is on board, if you defeat him he melts away, vowing to return.

To the island next. Here, natives and falling coconuts are the enemy, while swimmimg turtles are used to cross rivers.

With the island safely behind you, the end is in sight. The final scene is set inside Treasure Mountain, with rocks to hop across, flowers to avoid and your final opponent - the ghost of Captain Silver.

Captain Silver would have been better had it featured more levels. However, its simple gameplay, attractive screens, variety of creatures and typically-Sega extra touches make what little there is to play, quite enjoyable.

OVERALL 49%



Swash-buckling action on the Sega – an interesting experience for people who've never swashed their buckles before

GOLVELLIUS
Mastertronic

Two-Mega cartridge: £24.95

IN an ancient land far away, the evil Golvellius came forth and stole the fair princess Rena. Never one to ignore a princess's cry for help, Kelesis, the brave warrior, sets off for the dark valley to rescue her and defeat Golvellius.

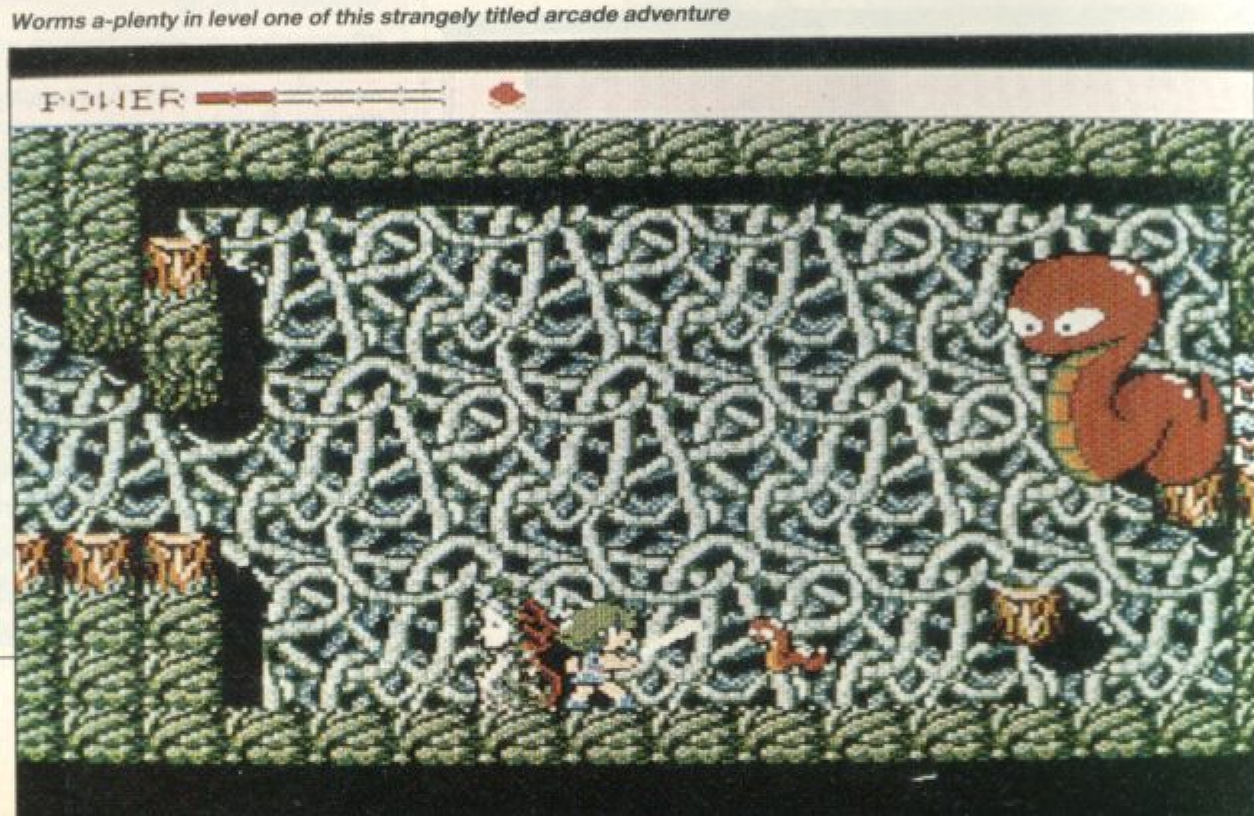
Opening with some hectic arcade action, you control Kelesis as he runs through a cavern leaping across gaps and shooting creatures in an effort to reach the valley.

Once there, you find the valley to be made up many regions, each of which requires puzzle solving to enable progress to the next. The inhabitants are unfriendly: bats, worms, scorpions and other creepy crawlies drain your energy on contact.

On the surface there isn't a lot to be seen or do, bar hack at creatures with a sword and pick up the reward for doing so. To get anywhere, you uncover potholes in each screen, down which lie characters with whom you may communicate.

Some of these friendly under-

Worms a-plenty in level one of this strangely titled arcade adventure



ground folk have equipment and extra abilities for sale, others offer advice which isn't always helpful. By piecing together clues given, you gain access to a vertically scrolling cave. At the end of which you get a chance to tackle the great guardian. If you kill him, the gateway to the next region opens.

The source of all your troubles, Golvellius, lies to the north, several regions away. Only by collecting seven magic crystals can you open the final gateway and confront the vile creature.

First impressions are of a fairly mediocre game. Fortunately *Golvellius* places equal emphasis on hack-'n'-slay and puzzles - a successful combination.

Each region is varied and features indigenous creatures. The differing scenarios and gradual increase in difficulty of puzzles helps retain interest. The inclusion of a password system aids long term appeal and the fractured English dialect spoken by the game's characters is entertaining – if for the wrong reasons.

Never mind the old ideas, formulae and presentation used by the game, bear *Golvellius* in mind if you want some brain teasing with your arcade action.

OVERALL 66%

DOUBLE DRAGON
Mastertronic

Two-Mega cartridge: £24.95

RELATIVES of Bruce, the Dragons are brothers, Billy and Jimmy Lee. They're mean men, out to save their kidnapped girl from the clutches of a big bad gang of warriors. Beginning with a very tasteful scene where the gang leader abducts the girl, the brothers begin their rescue mission in a dark, unpleasant alleyway.

Much fist flying and face pummelling ensues as the two fighters move through each of four levels, tackling the gang's cronies along the way. A number of the ugly enemies are armed with clubs, knives, explosives and whips – all are eager to give you first hand experience of them.

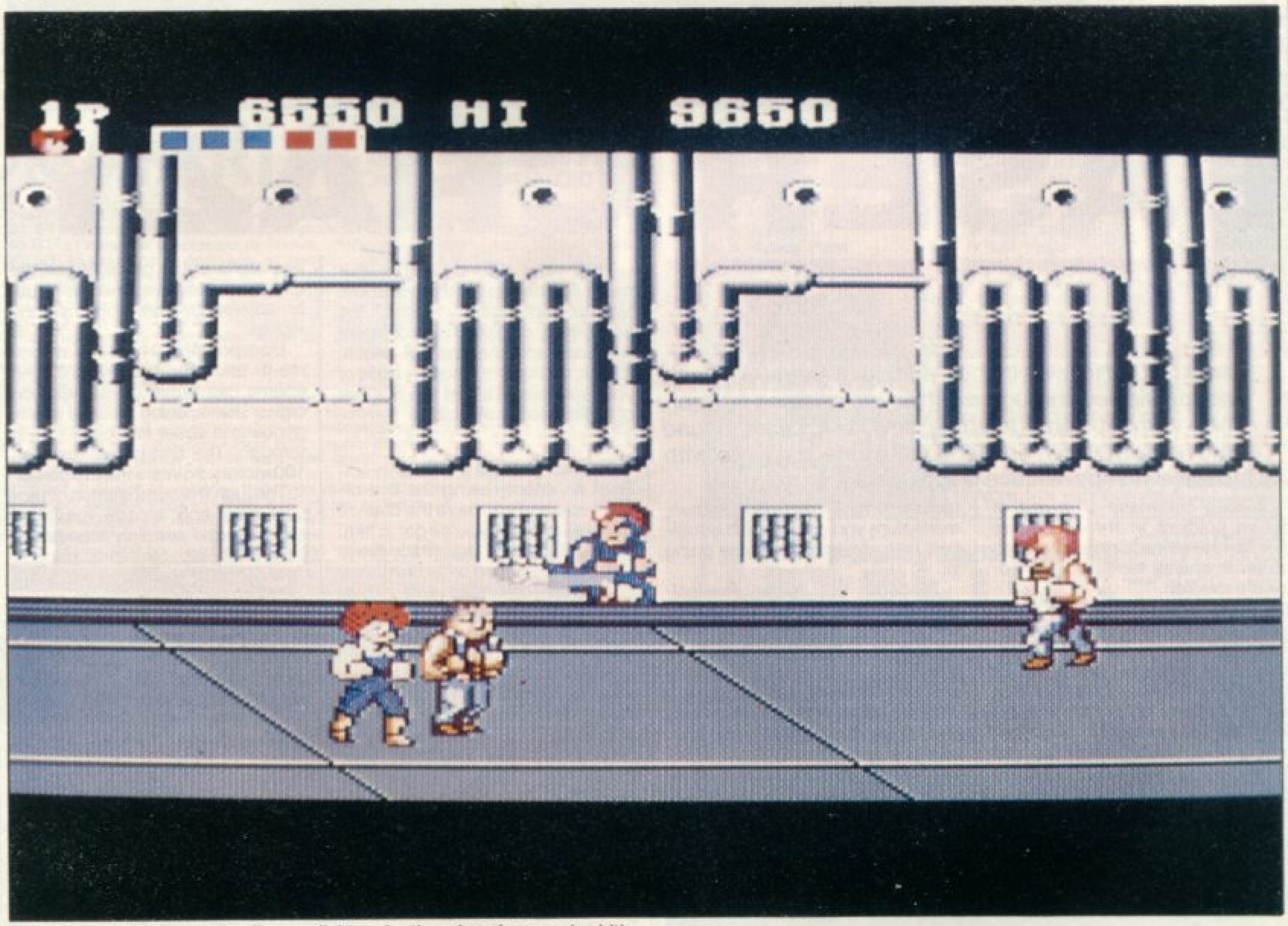
A swift flying kick to the head should make enemies drop their weapon, allowing you to pick it up and use. Boxes, boulders and barrels also serve as head-bashing weapons when picked up and thrown.

As the two brothers venture deeper into enemy territory the risks increase, with bottomless pits to avoid, water to leap over and BIG black warriors to fell.

Double Dragon's best feature is the dual player facility – a partner may join in any time. On the last level however, things aren't so easy as the continue play doesn't work for the final battle.

The problem of flickering sprites on the Sega has previously been a relatively minor one, *Double Dragon* changes that with its colossal amount of flicker. When characters move in front of one another things get very confused. Fortunately gameplay is simply terrific – playability makes *Double Dragon* one of the best Sega games yet.

OVERALL 81%



Amazing value! Two brawling Dragon fighters for the price of one-and-a-bit!

LORD OF THE SWORD
Mastertronic

Two-Mega cartridge: £24.95

LORD OF THE SWORD follows in the wake of the unsuccessful *Miracle Warriors* but features more action than adventure.

The land of Baljinya has fallen on troubled times: dark forces are at work and evil creatures prowl the countryside. As the warrior Landau, you've been chosen to destroy this evil and save the land . . . then take the rest of the day off!

The task is split into three missions, your first is to find the Tree of Marill, the second, to defeat a band of goblins and finally to destroy the stone idol.

You are armed with bow and arrow, sword, and a wealth of courage. Beginning in the town of Harfoot, you are free to choose a direction to travel in.

With excellent parallax scrolling for company, you move around the land via horizontal trails. Evil creatures of very weird origins are out and about looking for heroes to eat. And with only one life of limited energy and several very nasty monsters to deal with, your

quest could be very short. This difficulty level would destroy the game totally, if it wasn't for the continue-play option.

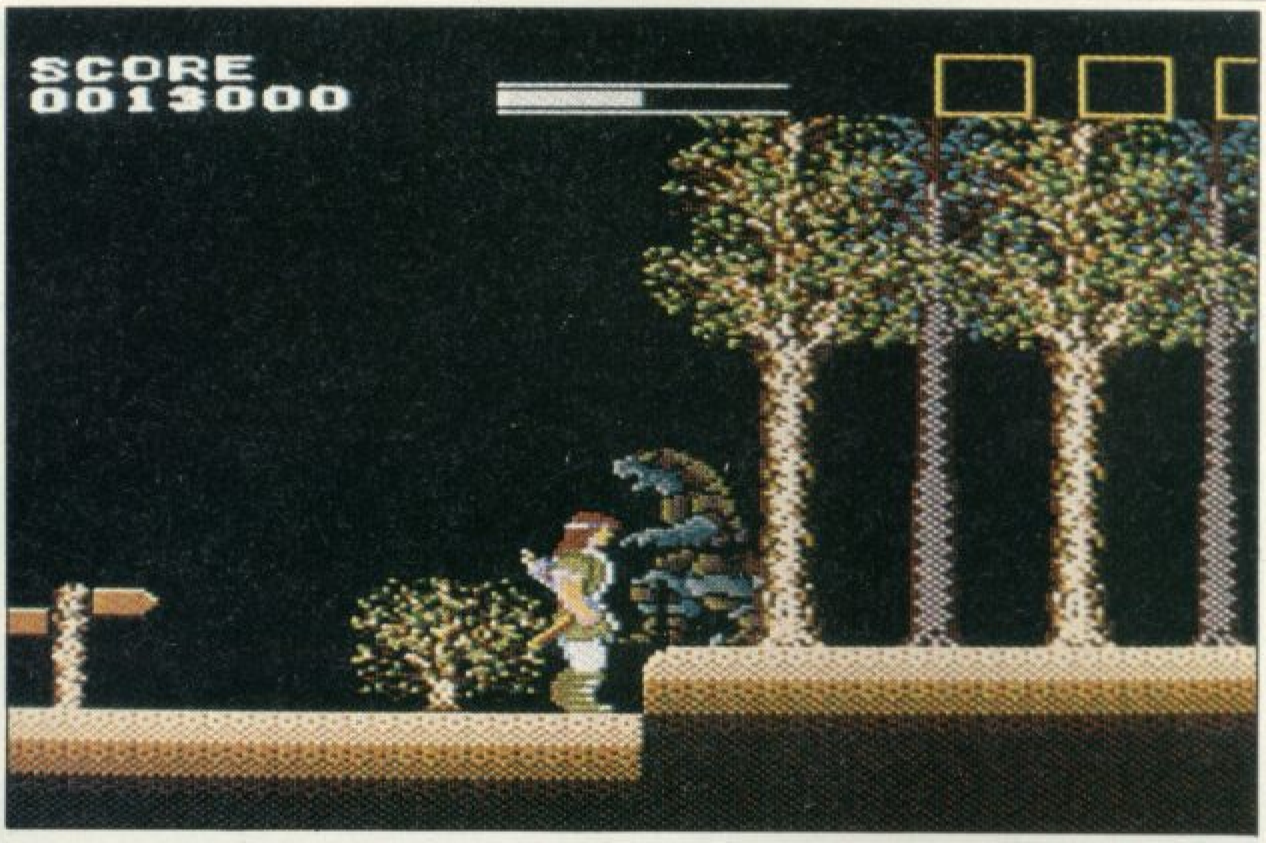
As you explore, villagers pass on scant bits of information regarding your three missions plus other tasks you may partake in should you wish. While these extra missions aren't important, the clues they unveil help towards completing your overall quest.

To help you on your way, a map of the land may be viewed while in towns. However, as it doesn't show your position, it's not much help.

Standard Sega graphics fail to distinguish the game from many others, although there are some well defined enemies to see, such as the floating eye and the boulder-throwing tree. A twee soundtrack that plays throughout is bearable – just.

Lord of the Sword, with its two dimensional movement and uninteresting gameplay, doesn't prove a compelling game despite the moderate depth offered by mini-missions.

OVERALL 58%



Striking forward to free the kingdom of Landau from tyranny

LASER CRAZY

LASER SQUAD
Target Games

Laser Squad follows in the tradition of *Rebel Star* with action viewed through a window displaying a scrolling combat zone. Nothing new, but *Laser Squad* moves away from conventional strategy games with its arcade style appearance and joystick control.

You take command of a unit of future soldiers in three different scenarios, all requiring your men to enter enemy territory on a do-or-die mission.

Laser Squad features three scenarios and provision for equipping each soldier with any of four makes of armour, nine types of weapon and seven accompanying types of ammunition. With a limitation of 200 creds to purchase equipment and weight/burden factors to take into consideration, make sure you get a squad equipped with everything before going in.

To begin, you deploy five soldiers at selected points around the battle zone. Each has a finite amount of action points which he uses up performing various actions. Different tasks require a different amount of action points and, once reduced to zero, your soldier's turn is over.

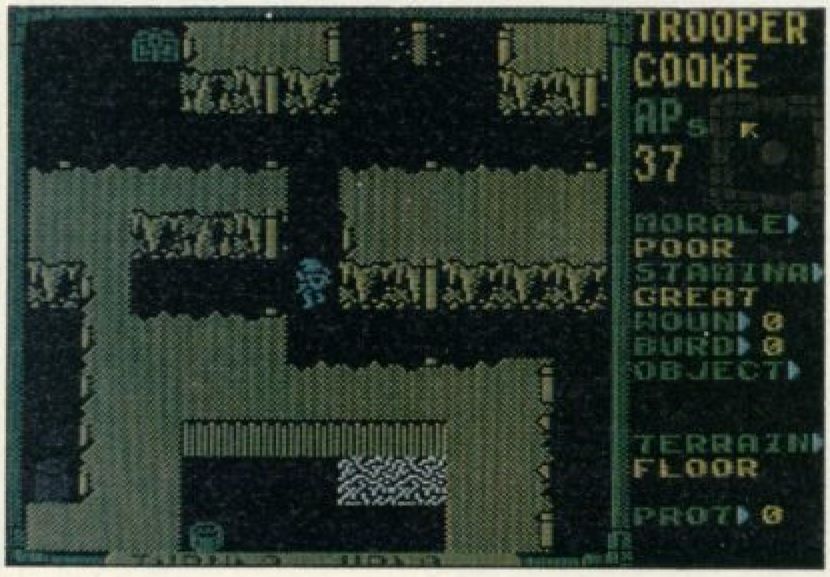
This may sound simple but many factors upset the equation. Morale, equipment weight, the complexity of tasks, firing different weapons and the general health, status, agility and weapon skills of your soldiers all affect the number of action points available.

Sneaky moves

Spot an enemy using the line-of-sight rule and you have the chance to fire everything you've got at him. Aimed, snap and automatic fire is possible together with the throw option for grenades and explosives. The graphic result of firing the weapon is shown as a laser bolt as it flies through each screen towards its target. This *Star Wars* style of combat, with laser bolts flying everywhere, is one of the best parts of the game. When the enemy starts firing, nerves must be steeled as laser bolts miss by inches.

Incorporating hidden movement and opportunity fire, the enemy can prove devastating on higher levels, using artificial intelligence and sheer firepower to win through. The first player to reach 100 victory points wins the game.

Through the combination of tactical play and arcade graphics, *Laser Squad* certainly stands out from the rest. Graphics bring a new sense of realism to the game without sacrificing the strategy/tactical elements. Play is satisfyingly complex across all levels and despite the limited scope of the three missions, future scenarios are catered for through an expansion facility.



SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £9.95

Good detailed characters moving around high-resolution battle zones makes Laser Squad **one of the more attractive strategy games around. Neat snippets of animation together with alarmingly fast laser bolts combine to add a professional touch to a great game.**

OVERALL 84%

OTHER FORMATS

C64 and Amstrad are planned for January (Cassette £9.95, Diskette £14.95). ST and Amiga should be available mid-1989, followed by PC (£24.95).

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FIVE FIST-FULLS OF F

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Screen shots from various formats.

Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House,


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Only the elite pass the three phase test of the Corps of Guardian Warriors – co-ordinated fury in destruction of the mutant hordes of the underworld; supreme command skills in frantic defence against the invading alien space fleets and merciless nerve in bloody battle against the monster of the Pit of Despair. Then the final chilling decision – enter the Metamorphosis Chamber to fuse lifeforms with your vanquished foe or face your next challenge with only the powers your mortal form bestows on you.
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Stand proud Artura – son of Pendragon – and set forth on your quest to unite the warring kingdoms of Albion in this age of bloody war and mysterious magickes. Your task is to rescue Nimue from the clutches of your evil half-sister, Morgause for which only your fearless nerve and superior fighting skills and the mystical wheel of Cerriddwen will overcome the ghouls, spiders, soldiers and giant rats you encounter.
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GRABBED BY THE TETROIDS

TETRA QUEST
Microdeal

The Olympic flame is about to be lit to herald the start of the first galactic games, when a messenger arrives with grave news. The legendary Phoenix Tablets have been stolen by the Tetroids, an evil race not invited to participate in the games.

Phoebus, the Sun God, delivers a challenge: whoever is brave enough to enter the Tetradome and recover the six tablets will have the power of Phoebus bestowed upon them as reward. The crowd goes quiet. Gulping back fear, you step forward to accept the dangerous quest.

The tablets have been broken into 64 pieces, each hidden in a quadrant – made up of four screens. Before a piece is revealed, four coins – one in each screen of a quadrant – must be collected in the correct order.

Screens are made up of a series of interconnecting lines which form the matrix upon which your Tetra Runner moves. Also moving along these line are aliens which don't take kindly to your presence. Fortunately they are despatched with a quick blast of your laser canon.

Shoot the odd alien

Amongst these aliens are several special creatures that behave oddly when shot: they leave an icon behind which affects your tetra runner, usually adversely. However, these creatures are worth more points when shot than are standard aliens.

It is quite easy to end up trapped out on a limb of the matrix with nothing to look forward too but a sticky end. However if you've accumulated enough points you can escape – at the expense of your score.

After every fourth level a password is generated. This is used to restart the game where your last life was lost – if you want to.

Tetra Quest is not easy and should take a while to complete. The aliens are really devious at times. All too often you find yourself stranded in a corner, surrounded by enemies, with insufficient Phoenix power to get away.

Tetra Quest is repetitive: though matrices alter with each quadrant, puzzles remain essentially the same.

ATARI ST
£19.95

Graphics could have been more detailed; Tetra Quest **looks like an 8- rather than 16-bit game. Certainly challenging, but there is little to keep you gripped for long.**

OVERALL 61%

AMIGA
£19.95

Very similar to the Atari ST version with only sound improved.

OVERALL 61%

OTHER FORMATS

No conversions planned as yet



Keep taking the tablets, they'll help get rid of your Tetroids

---

VERSION UPDATE

British made

ULTIMA V
MicroProse

Commodore 64/128:
Diskette £24.95

THE latest troubled episode in the history of the mythical world of Britannia was told and well-received in TGM**011**. The retrieval of the powerful Codex of Ultimate Wisdom breached the surface of the land and linked it to the demon-infested Underworld.

The portal to the Underworld was found and explored by a band of experienced fighters, including the ruler, Lord British. Only one returned, the remainder feared dead. Blackthorn became ruler and, corrupted by the hooded Shadowlords, grew tyrannical and banished noble men.

Summoned to this land to help, you lead Iolo and Shamino – each with standard RPG variables – through scrolling plan-view map screens to find Lord British.

Combat and magic are important factors, the latter using ingredients and words to cast spells.

The C64 version plays identically to the PC original, other than the annoyingly-frequent disc access. The graphic stills of the introduction and character-creation sequences use crude stipple shading, dreary colours and sloppy definition. Fortunately, in-game graphics are adequate although simple and lacking in colour. Sound effects are even worse than the PC's, but 128 owners have a range of fourteen mostly pleasant tunes to accompany play.

These criticisms do not, however, affect the value of this huge and compelling computer RPG.

COMMODORE 64/128:
OVERALL 89%

PC: TGM011 91%



Facing undead attacks from skeletal Britains who make no bones about their intentions

ABOUT TO BE SATELLITE

SDI
Mediagenic

Reviewed on the Sega (under the title *Global Defense* - TGM**005** 81%), *SDI* takes you to the final frontier and World War III. Missiles are flying and a solitary satellite is sent up to stop them before the USA goes up in smoke.

Moving horizontally, your satellite has nothing more than a single laser with which to destroy nukes. Not a lot to show for the billions of dollars spent on the SDI project, but it has to do. The satellite can move around the screen or its gunsight may be locked on targets, depending on which mouse button is held down. A seemingly tricky dual control but one that is swift to master.

Killer satellites, drone ships and ever-so-clever homing spacecraft float through the black ether, also trying to destroy the world – contact with them is unsurprisingly fatal.

If any nuclear missiles make it past your umbrella of laser fire the satellite is taken to the defensive screen. Here you're pitted against incoming warheads, their destination – America. With little time to prevent disaster, accuracy and speed are paramount. Let too many missiles through and there'll be no more truth, justice and the American way (who cheered?).

It's war ether way

If you keep a slick trigger-finger and a cool head, the USA should remain in one piece following the ballistic barrage. No time to rest though as your satellite is taken to the next level with more enemy missiles to defeat and space junk to avoid.

SDI would be a fine game if it had more depth. The limited nature of the gameplay is heightened by the lack of the coin-op's dual satellite option. There is a certain pleasure to be had in progressing through each level and learning the attack patterns, but there's an overall lack of excitement during play. Sadly *SDI* is just a variation on the *Missile Command* theme and misses the mark in offering nothing more than passing interest.

ATARI ST
£19.99

SDI **tries to hide its repetitive gameplay with superb graphics, a mixture of average tunes and professional presentation.**

OVERALL 56%

OTHER FORMATS

***SDI* is available for Commodore 64/128, Amstrad CPC and Spectrum 48/128 (Cassette only) – Cassette £9.99, Diskette 14.99. An Amiga conversion is planned for early next year.**

"With little time to prevent disaster, accuracy and speed are paramount"



Your lone satellite battles bravely to save the US from nuclear destruction

OCCULATION OCCUPATION

TOTAL ECLIPSE
Incentive

With *Driller* and *Dark Side* to their name, Incentive have wallowed in success since the birth of Freescape. With a 15% speed increase and more rooms (50 in all), the Freescape series looks set to reach even greater heights.

The origins of *Total Eclipse* lie back in the mists of time when Egypt was a mighty nation and its rule was respected throughout the Mediterranean. The people of the land, tired of the many sacrifices made to their Sun God, rebelled. Their resistance resulted in a curse from the High Priest.

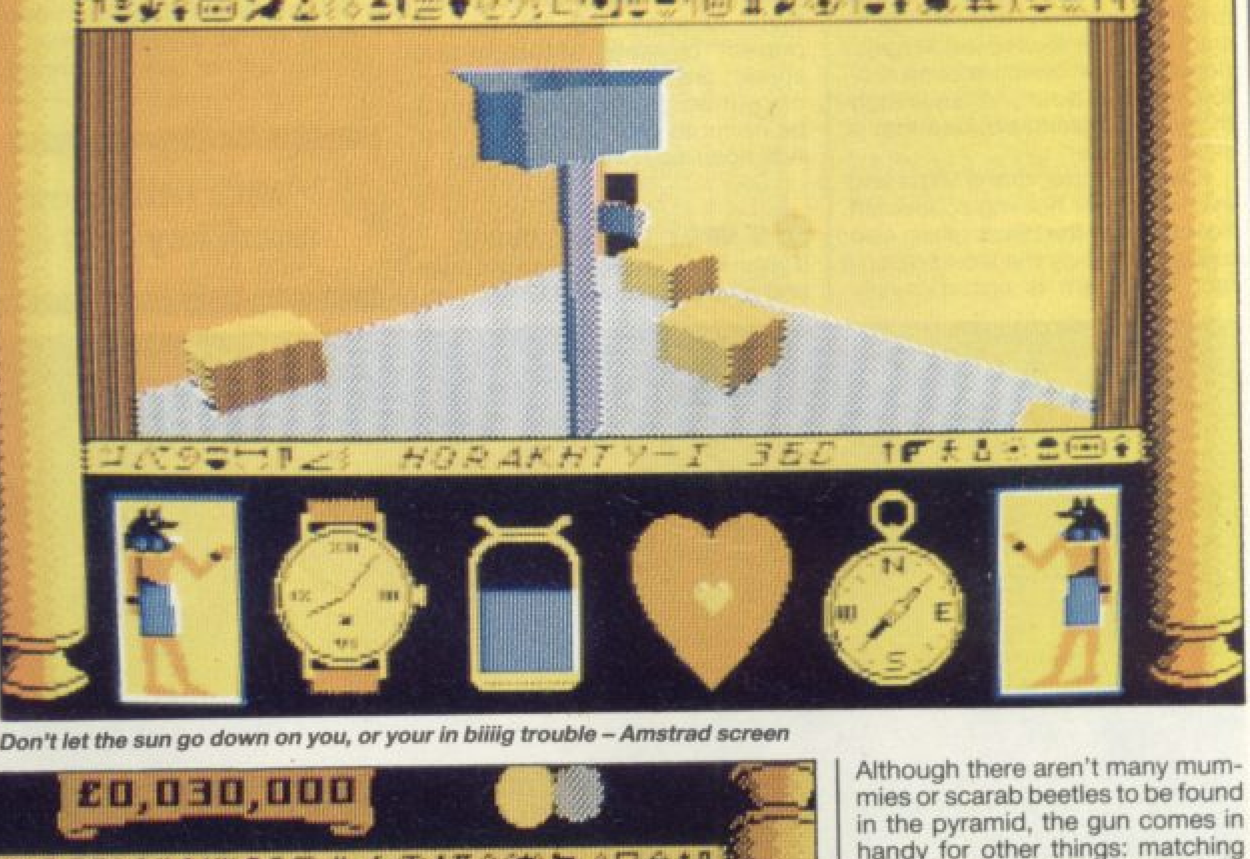
The curse wasn't a mild pestilence or shower of locusts, but centred around a massive pyramid with a shrine dedicated to the Sun God at its top. If the sun was ever eclipsed, the curse would cause the moon to explode – its remains bombarding Earth with deadly results. Since then the curse has fortunately remained dormant.

Bringing us to more modern times, Oct 26 1930, you, as an explorer, are in the right place but unfortunately at the wrong time. Two hours away from the end of the world, the moon inches its way across the sky towards a total, and very final, eclipse.

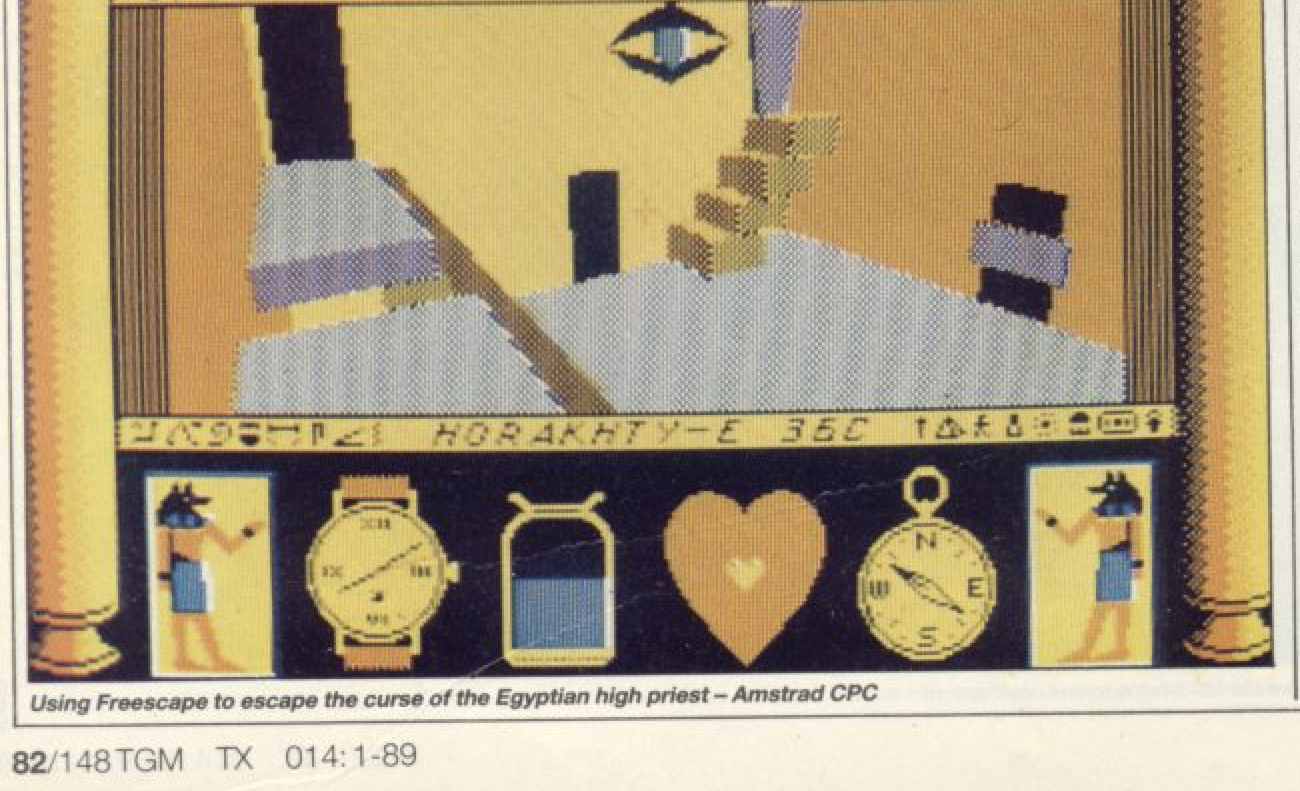
Beginning next to your trusty biplane, entering the pyramid causes the claustrophobic world of ancient Egypt to come to life through modern day Freescape technology. Sarcophaguses, treasure chests, stairways, water troughs and other artefacts of ancient Egypt origin await your inspection. Although treasure isn't the priority, it doesn't hurt to pick some up along the way. Collecting ankhs is similarly beneficial as they are keys to further locations.

Peer amid the desert sands

For protection, you are armed with a limitless-ammunition pistol.



Don't let the sun go down on you, or your in biiiig trouble – Amstrad screen



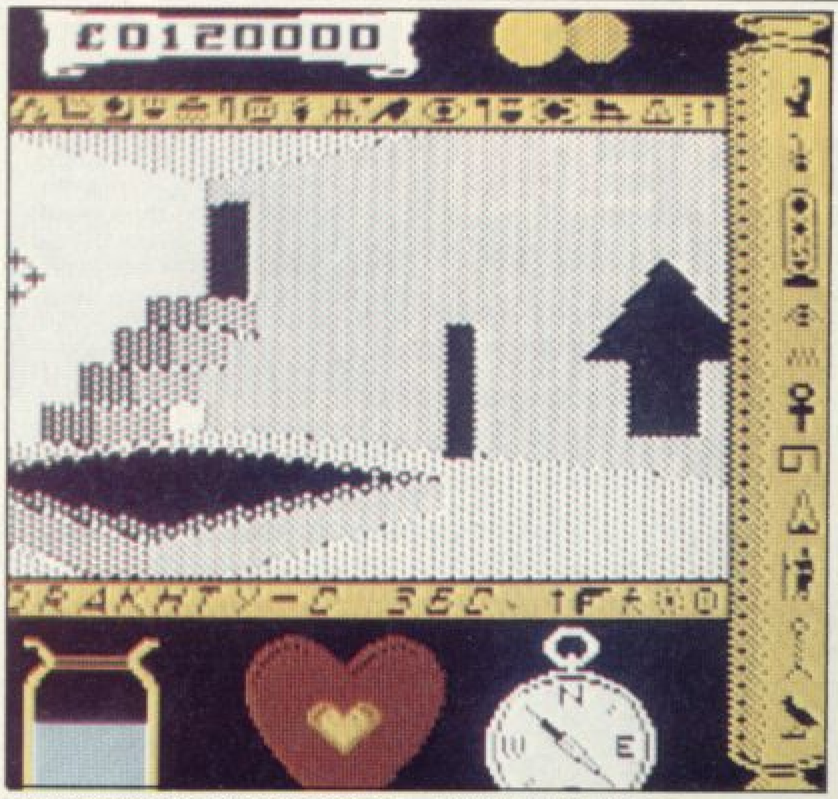
Using Freescape to escape the curse of the Egyptian high priest – Amstrad CPC

Although there aren't many mummies or scarab beetles to be found in the pyramid, the gun comes in handy for other things: matching hieroglyphics, when shot in sequence, open doorways, and treasure chests are shot open for the prizes within.

Other than the impending doom of the planet, you can die through dehydration (avoided by filling your water bottle from troughs) or suffering a heart attack (your heart beat increases should you be exposed to poison or fall from ledges). Resting calms the heart but time is always moving on – the total eclipse draws ever nearer.

Played in real-time, *Total Eclipse* shouldn't pose any immediate problems for veterans of the previous Freescape games. It follows the same pattern in style and use of commands, but it's the puzzles which bring out the best in the game. With its puzzle-orientated gameplay and down-to-earth setting, the realism and sense of atmosphere are faultless.

And puzzles aren't restricted to separate chambers but expand as



Puzzling over a strange pyramid room – note the lower glyphics – Spectrum screen

you progress. A number of neighbouring rooms can make up one big puzzle and often hieroglyphics have to be matched to force open doorways to new regions. The presence of trip wires and pressure pads provide an unseen form of hazard and can lead to much tearing out of hair.

Total Eclipse is the best yet from Incentive. The puzzles, tricks and traps of an Egyptian tomb merged with the incredibly atmospheric 3-D solid graphics of Freescape make it a magical experience – a program not to be missed.

SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

Driller now looks positively slow in comparison with the latest in the Freescape series. As in Dark Side**, the monochromatic design of each chamber adds immensely to atmosphere and creates a frighteningly realistic game as a result. This is heightened by the simple but highly effective sound of your heartbeat.**

OVERALL 91%

AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

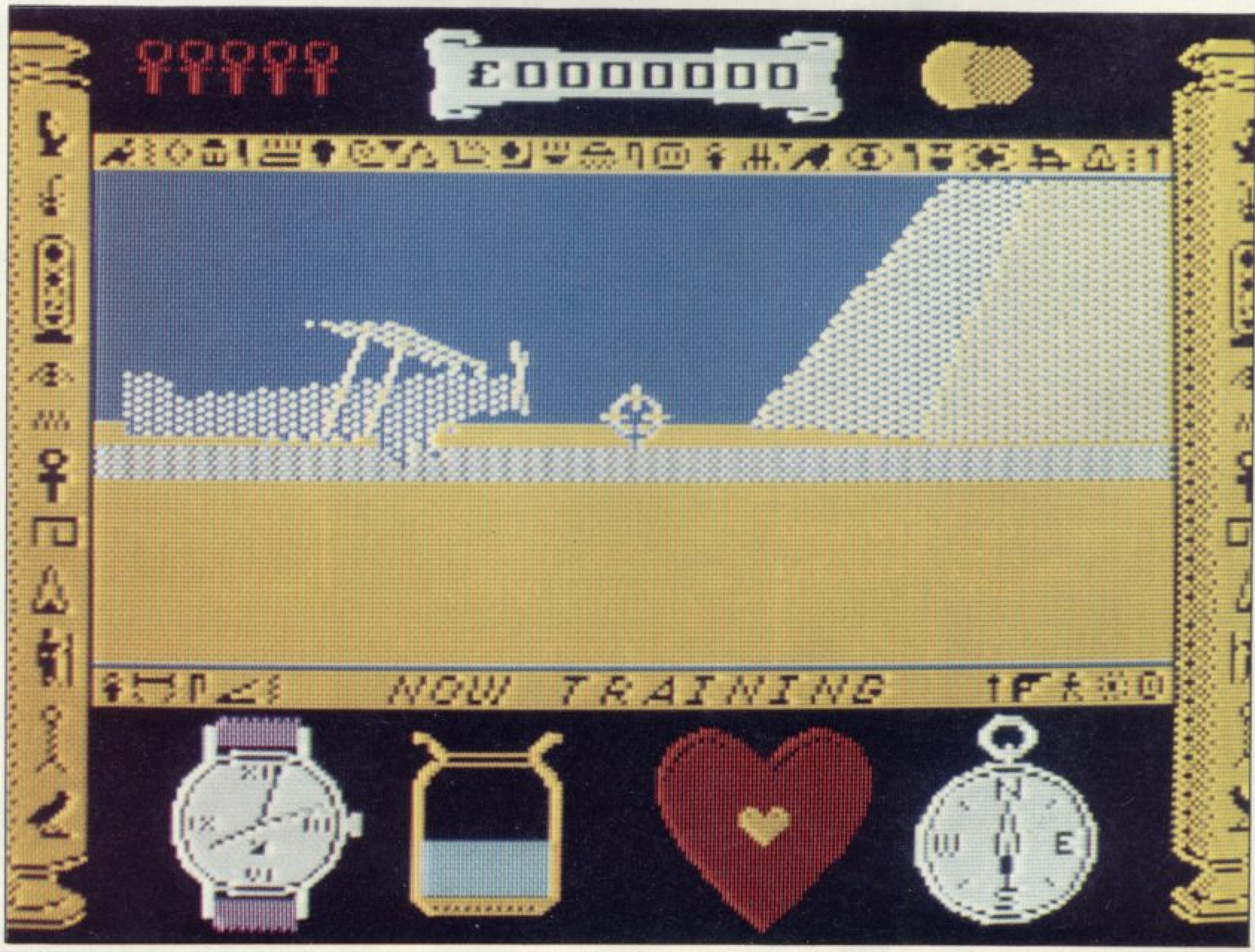
There is a slight, but nevertheless welcome, improvement in speed over previous Freescape releases. Sound effects and overall presentation are much the same. The light colours used create the perfect atmosphere for this type of game - more so than in Driller **or** Dark Side**.**

OVERALL 92%

OTHER FORMATS

A *Total Eclipse* is imminent on the Commodore 64/128 (Cassette £9.95, Diskette £12.95). Atari ST, Amiga and PC versions will follow next year.

"With its puzzle-orientated gameplay and down-to-earth setting, the realism and sense of atmosphere are faultless"



I SPY WITH MY LITTLE PIECE

ESPIONAGE
Grandslam

Originally devised as a board game in 1984, *Espionage* was rereleased during the summer of '88 and subsequently converted to the small screen by Grandslam Entertainments. A game for one to four players, the objective is to become Master Spy – achieved by accumulating loot.

At the centre of the playing area are four micro-films containing vital information. All-important money is made by getting a microfilm back to your base or by terminating another player's agents.

Each player begins with 12 agents split into three groups: six courier, four secret and two surveillance. Courier agents move diagonally; secret agents sneak in any direction and surveillance agents move along horizontal or vertical lines. All may move any number of spaces on their turn, provided they don't travel over no-go areas on the board.

As time goes, spy!

Terminating an agent is akin to jumping a piece in draughts. Provided there is a square just beyond your opponent in line with the direction you are travelling, you can jump over, and hence terminate, that piece. You may terminate several pieces in one go should the situation allow.

Further features include agent exchange, sanction and détante. Exchange allows a player to swap the position of any two of his agents in a move similar to castleing in *Chess*. This is extremely useful and can drastically alter the state of play.

Sanction should only be used by experienced players. If an agent is in position to terminate an opposing agent and chooses not to do so, they can be sanctioned and consequently removed from the game.

Détante occurs at the start of play. Each player moves their 12 agents to any position on the board regardless of normal movement patterns. During détante, agents cannot be sanctioned or terminated.

On loading *Espionage*, you are asked to define a series of game options. These include number of players, either human or computer controlled, a time limit for the whole game or individual moves and whether you wish to play with the sanction feature or not.

Players status is shown to the right of the screen. Just below this is an options icon. The status box may be replaced by a menu featuring options to aid play. For example: Zoom gives a magnified view of a chosen section of the board, Pause freezes the game momentarily, Hint gets the computer to suggest a move and Quit finishes the game – the player with the most money is declared winner.

Espionage may be tackled on two levels: each player trying to terminate as many of the others within a set time limit or as a full-blown strategy game.



Cameron peeking out from behind his copy of the Sun to make a sneaky move – Amiga screen

AMIGA
£19.95

Graphically there is very little one can do with a game like Espionage. **The annoying tune which runs throughout play can thankfully be switched off to let you enjoy a fiendishly addictive game in peace.**

OVERALL 79%

It would have been nice if a skill level option had been included, as it stands it takes a lot of practise to match the computer. However, fans of strategy board games should enjoy *Espionage*.

COMMODORE 64/128
Cassette: £9.95
Diskette: £14.95

The slowest of the bunch – it takes an age to think about moves. Graphics and sound are not particularly outstanding but they don't detract from gameplay too much.

OVERALL 72%

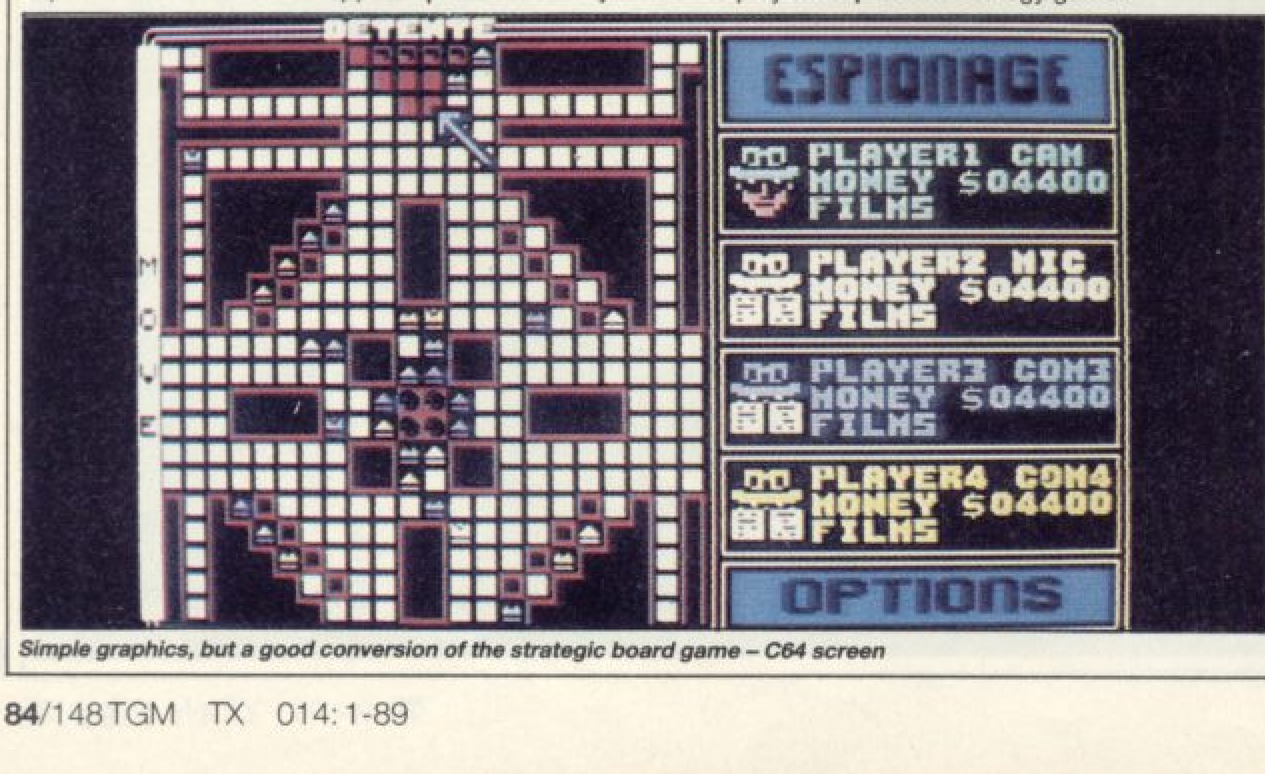
SPECTRUM 48/128
Cassette: £8.95
Diskette: £14.95

This implementation is very good as it operates at a reasonable speed. However, the computer didn't seem to play as expertly as on other machines.

OVERALL 77%

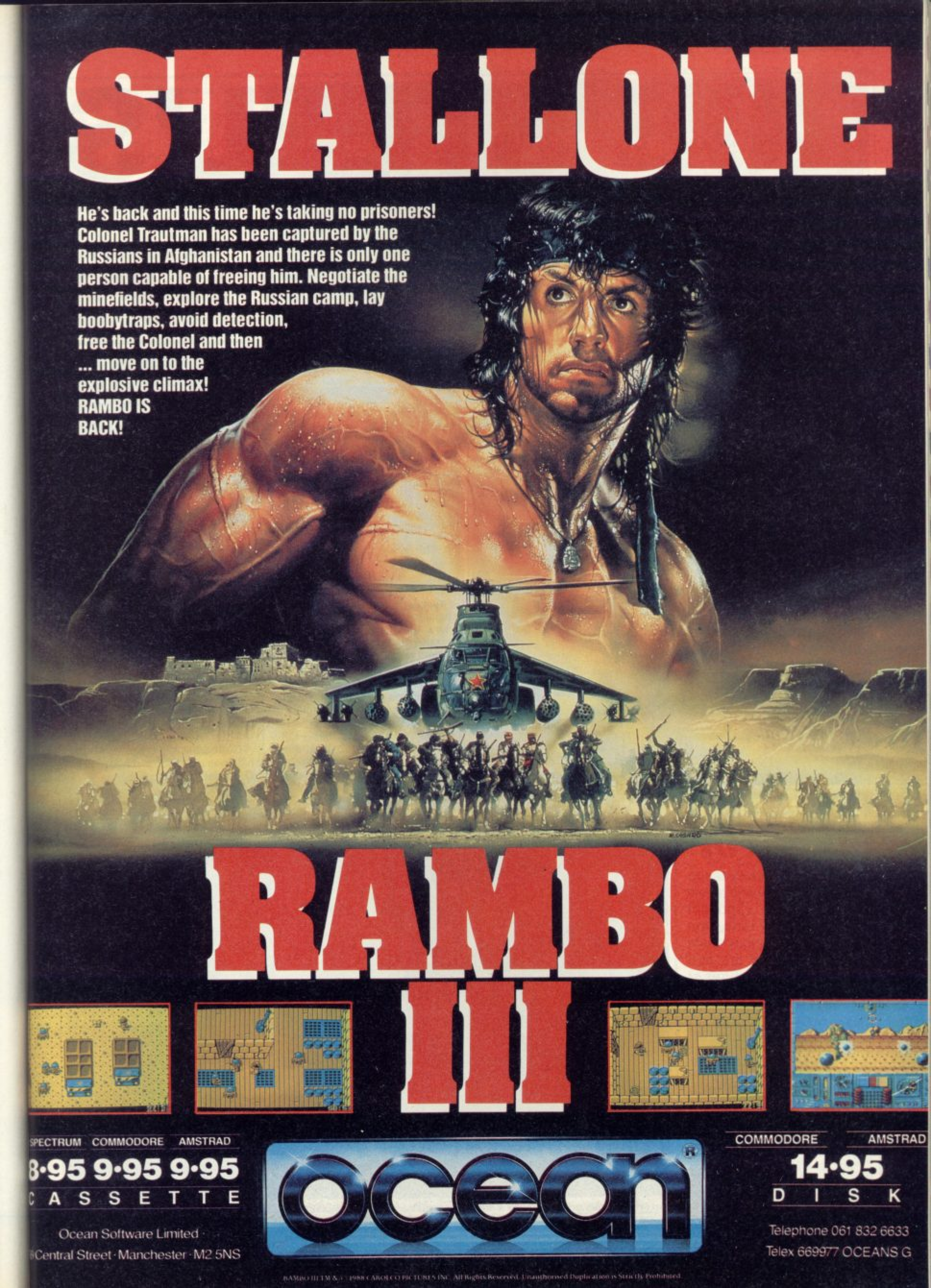
OTHER FORMATS

Amstrad CPC (Cassette £8.95, Diskette £14.95), MSX (Cassette £8.95), PC 5¼ inch Diskette (£19.95), 3½ inch Diskette (£24.95) and Atari ST (£19.95) should all available shortly.



Simple graphics, but a good conversion of the strategic board game – C64 screen

"A fiendishly addictive game"



STALLONE
He's back and this time he's taking no prisoners! Colonel Trautman has been captured by the Russians in Afghanistan and there is only one person capable of freeing him. Negotiate the minefields, explore the Russian camp, lay boobytraps, avoid detection, free the Colonel and then ... move on to the explosive climax! RAMBO IS BACK!
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ROB STEEL'S GETTING ADVENTUROUS

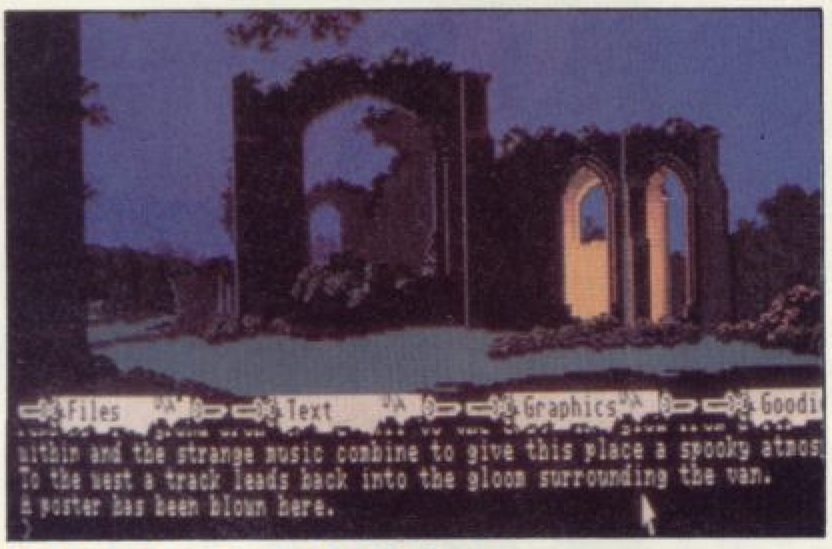
STEEL SHAVINGS

Psychadelia is not a favourite mode of mine, and so it was with horror that I looked upon my adventure section in issue 12 of TGM. Rest assured that the graphics in *Fish!* do not actually look like this. In fact, would the real graphic please stand up!

To Anita of Magnetic Scrolls, Claire of Rainbird and you, may I apologise on behalf of the Newsfield film-planning department and suggest they leave the wild mushrooms alone.

As for this month, not one adventure has graced my desk! So to prove I'm not one to panic in a crisis, here is a look back on the adventures of '88 . . . No it's not a fill in . . . honest!





ROB STEEL'S ROUND UP

As the old year fades to the distance and a new one begins, I thought I'd light my pipe, don my slippers, snuggle down in front of a real fire and reflect on the adventures of 1988.

It was a good year for Activision/Mediagenic's adventure interest, Sierra On-Line Inc. Their program, *Space Quest II* was released in February amid many a chuckle from reviewers and a staggering 95% from me. The sequel to *Space Quest I* (never!), it features the nefarious Sludge Vohaul and his attempt to kill off engineer Roger Wilko – played by you.

Humour and comical graphics abound, and combine brilliantly with taxing puzzles and an alien atmosphere to make it deserving of the title *Adventure Of The Year*.. if I were awarding titles that is.

Not far behind come *Jinxter* (TGM**003**, 92%) by Magnetic Scrolls and another Sierra title, *Police Quest* (TGM**004**, 92%).

Jinxter! has an unusual plot: the good fortune of your homeland is decreasing rapidly. Evil magicians are behind the phenomenon, your task is to find charms and a bracelet with which to send them back from whence they came.

Great graphics and good puzzles made up for the toungue-in-cheek scenario, and the fact that you couldn't die in the game made it all the more enjoyable.

In *Police Quest* you are one of Lyttons finest and as such are expected to keep the streets safe for Joe Public. Should you prove yourself a good enough cop, you may get a job undercover – and with it the chance to thwart the dastardly doings of Death Angel, evil gang leader.

Cartoon-like graphics and hilarious situations made *Police Quest* far from forgetable.

In the mid-summer desert of adventures *Legend Of The Sword*



Not any ordinary bridge this, it's a Magnetic scrolls creation, so anything can happen – Amiga screen

(TGM**008**, 91%) appeared as if an oasis. I grabbed it thirstily.

Evil wizard, Suzar is causing havoc. You and your band of five men have been charged with finding a legendary sword and using it to destroy him.

Icon and text driven, the graphics, prose and puzzles combine to make a very enjoyable romp through adventuredom.

That was the year that was

Fish! is next, not usually my favourite dish, but Magnetic Scrolls served it up wonderfully. Again featuring an unusual plot, it has you as a member of the department of Inter-Dimensional espionage. You and your kind are capable of warping – an exercise whereby you change your physical form and travel through time.

While taking a well earned holiday, in the guise of a goldfish, you discover yet another plan by the evil syndicate, the Seven Deadly Fins, to take over the world. Only you can stop them.

The odd scenario soon settles down to include more conventional locations and puzzles, and the very pretty graphics add a certain something.

Where's Infocom I hear you cry. Right here.

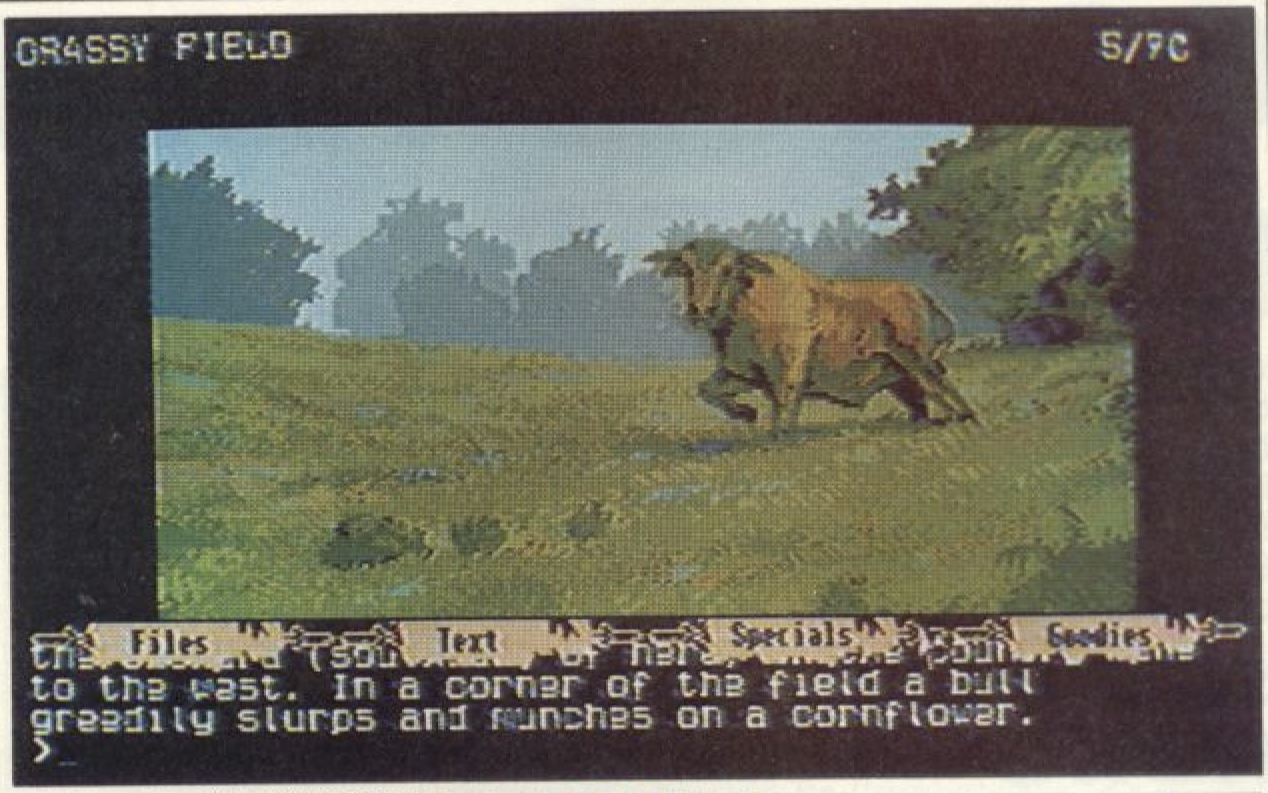
The *Zork* trilogy has kept adventurers happy for many hours and is probably Infocom's best known scenario. Perhaps trying to maintain this success, they produced *Beyond Zork* (TGM**005**,87%), an adventure with a little role playing sprinkled on top.

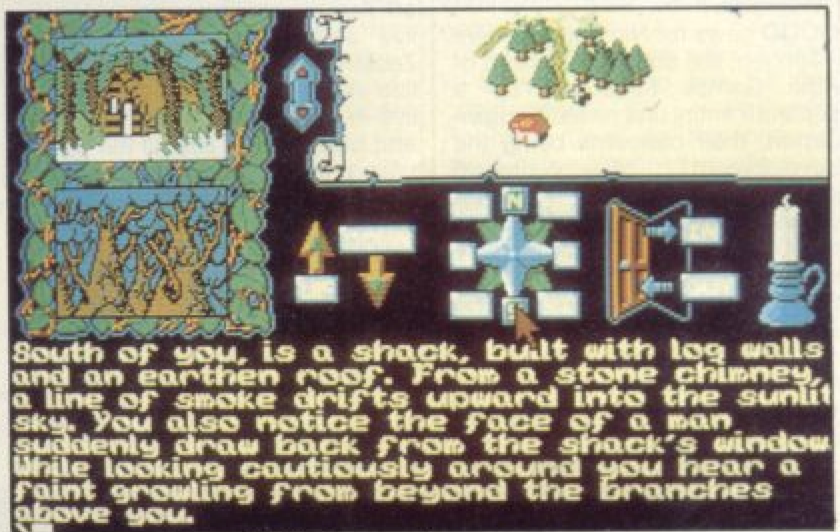
The Kingdom of Quendor is in trouble, the Enchanter's guild is in ruins and the village lies abandoned – it is your task to find out why. Updating maps, windows, character attributes and possesions are all displayed on-screen – innovations for Infocoms games. Fortunately for those hardened adventurers they include the option to play the game in the more traditional way.

Icon driven adventures were becoming more popular and Mirrorsoft released *Shadowgate* (TGM**004**,87%) to a waiting market.

You are the last of an ancient line of kings, and as such must enter the foreboding fortress of Shadowgate and confront the evil warlock. Failure results in him raising the Behemoth and taking over the world.

Totally icon driven, the game relies on its very impressive graphics and sound effects to create an atmosphere – it succeeds. Creeping into the fortress amid creaking doors and flickering torches give a great feeling of involvement.





Attractive graphics and brilliant gameplay

But oh how the mighty fell

Level released *Gnome Ranger* (TGM**002**, 49%) to some acclaim from all it seems, except myself. Ingrid Bottomlow and her quest to return home did very little for me. She could stay in the strange and wonderful land to which she's been 'accidently' banished for all I cared.

The graphics and technical expertise involved in its creation were very good, but the plot was not, hence the low mark.

Surprisingly, Infocom also released a loser, *Nord And Bert Couldn't Make Head Or Tail Of It* (TGM**002**, 41%). It is a collection of eight stories which involve the use of puns and wordplay to create and solve puzzles. In truth it becomes merely a question of experimenting with words, and is quite boring.

Next year we have *Infocomics*, *Tale Spin*, (adventure creator from Microdeal) and hopefully some *STAC* created games to look forward.

Whatever happens, I hope the number and overall quality of both 8- and 16-bit adventures will be better than those of '88.



Lovely graphics and loads of text try unsuccessfully to hide an awful plot – ST screen

CONFRONTATION: COIN-OP

When he's not playing *R-Type 2* on the office PC Engine, Robin Hogg is out tasting the real thing in arcades around the UK. Will he become hopelessly addicted to *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts*, *New Zealand Story* and *Gang Busters*, or will the curse of empty pockets force him to return?

SLOT NEWS

GOOD news for Nintendo owners - Tengen, the software division of Atari Games have set up a separate entity unit called **Tengen Japan**, their concerns being the development of Nintendo software alongside coin-op games. Tengen have been responsible for producing many an Atari classic of modern times, the more recent games include the superb *Toobin'*, *Xybots* and *A.P.B.*. Let's hope some of the magic of their coin-ops is captured in the games for the Japanese console.

Continuing in the Atari vein **Atari** have recently unveiled not only a new game but a new idea in video game presentation as well. The game is called *Cyberball* and if you can imagine the rough-and-tough play of American football coupled with a future setting and robotic players then you're halfway there. The game is played with up to four players around the cabinet, the two player version having players next to each other rather than opposite. Team play and singular player action are catered for and the game looks set to be a winner - with a very original idea and Atari's quality touch when it comes to game-creation it should do well.

THE NEW ZEALAND STORY

Taito

When coin-op manufacturers start producing games about Kiwis, you know that it's either a very clever marketing ploy designed to cash in on the 'cute' success of games like *Bubble Bobble*, or someone high up in the company is off their trolley. *New Zealand Story* is the said game and it doesn't look as if anyone at Taito is mad.

No futuristic world or primitive land at the dawn of time setting for this game, *The New Zealand Story* takes us Down Under to the isles off Aussie country where Maoris live and geysers gush – New Zealand. It is here that the Kiwis live in harmony, at least they *did* live in harmony until the big, bad and blue leopard seal of the North Island came along and spirited away all but one of them. A time for action if ever there was one.

Being the flightless bird that he is (a hesitant guess would make the cute featherball a 'him') Tiki would seem to be in it deep right from the start. On each level of the game Tiki's prime, or rather, only objective is to rescue his caged Kiwi friend locked away as far away as possible. Tiki, brave little soul that he is, risks life, limb and feathers to get through to and release his mate. The baddies to keep away from are often very cute to look at (such as a cat and deadly snails) and lull the player into a false sense of security. Poor Tiki can wind up paranoid very quickly in this game!

Avoiding cute but ultimately deadly enemies is the name of the game and weapons can be collected, baddies leapt over and more to help in the rescue attempt. The action is familiar and has all the same charm and style of play as *Super Mario Brothers*, *Bubble Bobble* and the like. Playability of course is the game's selling point and *The New Zealand Story* has more than enough of it.

When I first saw *TNZS* it was tucked away in the corner of the arcade while big title coin-ops such as *Operation Wolf* and *AfterBurner* occupied centre stage. This may have been a one-off but I doubt it, the game may not get the success it deserves thanks to the overly cute presentation and gameplay. Mind you, if *Bubble Bobble* can surface as one of the most playable (and played) coin-ops ever then there's hope for *The New Zealand Story* yet.



GHOSTS 'N' GHOULS

Capcom (Preview)

Using the new CP system technology, the follow-up to *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* is an outstanding game, and a major change from the original title. With little more than the style of gameplay and the knight himself to bring back memories of part one – *Ghouls 'N Ghosts* is simply superb to look at



A heavily armoured demon giving our tin-suited hero a tough time

- with the new technology and graphic techniques first hinted at in *Forgotten Worlds* coming to light in all their glory.

Now a king, Arthur the brave is having trouble with his beloved princess who's got herself captured again. With three years of plotting to draw on the baddies have cooked up some real mean battles and opponents to face.

Not only are there six types of weapon to use but sorcery as well. Using the gradual build-up method made popular in *R-Type* the sorcery is not only spectacular on the eyes but spectacular in its devastation. Arthur leaps platforms, climbs ladders, defeats mega-baddies (take a look at the



Lancing a monster to make a path through the platforms of the horned mountain

Devil of Darkness to see how mega they can get) and creates havoc on each level with all the appeal of his earlier days.

All the frenetic action of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* is here (but with much trickier sections to pass and harder opponents to defeat). *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* is a considerably stronger title than nearly all other Capcom games so far. The graphics have to be seen to be believed and the thoroughly addictive gameplay should see the crowds flooding into the arcades. Capcom have got it made for 1989.

GANG BUSTERS

Konami

Following *The Main Event*, Konami seem to be going slightly astray with their coin-ops. *Thundercross* isn't the most awesome of machines to grace the UK arcades recently and *Hot Chase* may not survive the battle with Sega's *Power Drift* and Taito's *Chase HQ*. Even the *Nemesis* series is beginning to look a little worn.

The same thing can be said of their latest machine *Gang Busters*. Two cops (with an air of Laurel and Hardy about them) are out on the beat in Crimesville USA – the toughest patch of city ground around. This is a relatively new concept in coin-ops but an original idea can't lift the game from its lacklustre, *Commando*-type gameplay.

Crooks are wandering free in the city and one or two of the city's finest are on patrol to stop them. Criminals, very petty crooks, muggers and other citizens on the wrong side of the law persist in trying to see off the two lawmen, but a burst from a gun should convince them otherwise. Aside from moving through to new levels the objective is to arrest the crooks carrying bags of swag around - collect and deposit them in a police wagon to gain extra weapons.

The action takes place down by the docks, through city streets and other screens which aren't particularly brilliant choices for backdrops. While graphically adequate, the game does have some humourous touches. If you want a really entertaining police game, go for Atari's *A.P.B.*. If you're looking for a remix of an old idea this may be worth a go.

I can see why *Commando* games still appeal in this day and age but they do need that extra something to survive. With *Gang Busters* there isn't enough to provide anything more than mediocre satisfaction. The addition of a dual player mode and horizontal scrolling help but the game is a loser to begin with. In a word, disappointing.

ROBOCOP

Data East (Preview)

Ocean have the rights to *RoboCop*, the computer game, well tied up, and with the film aiming to be permanently out on hire at your local video shop over the Christmas period, Data East couldn't have timed the release of their coin-op conversion better.

Set in Delta City, *RoboCop* features a metallic Judge Dredd patrolling the streets, dealing out death to those he feels deserving.

The *Dragon Ninja* influence is prominent throughout play as the main character moves against a backdrop of horizontally-scrolling ruined buildings, dark alleyways and grimy streets.

If you've seen the movie, you'll recognise a lot of the scenes: the garage, drug factory and even the OmniConsumer Products central building. With Data East's graphic prowess used to the full, the visual impression is stunning.

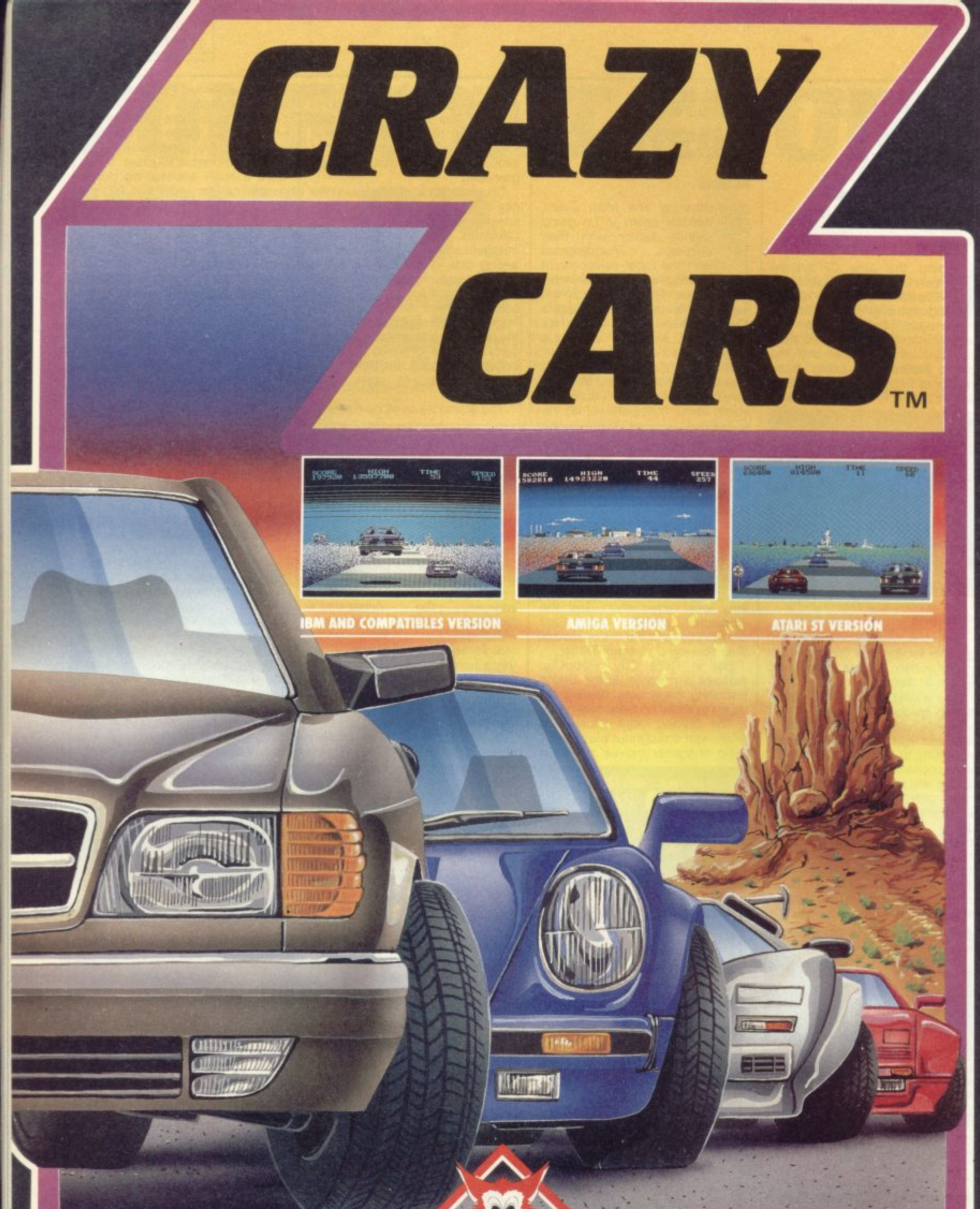
Collectable extra weapons improve the cyber-cop's firepower against chainsaw-wielding, knife-throwing, motorbike-riding criminals. While this is hardly a new idea, the more powerful weapons prove as devastating as they seemed in the film – they define the word ultra-violence.

In between the horizontally scrolling levels, *RoboCop* takes on a mugger who uses a woman hostage as a shield and practises his aim at the 3-D gunnery range. These sections add life to what could otherwise be a repetitive game.

The confrontation with ED-209 is a real sight to see as the comparatively miniscule RoboCop takes on the massive droid in true player-vs-mothership style.

If you enjoyed the movie (and there aren't many who didn't), you'll be enthralled by the coin-op. The front end is simply superb with the shadowy figure of RoboCop fading in and out accompanied by guns blazing. Likewise, the music and speech are direct from the film. Data East have done the movie proud.




CRAZY
CARS
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IBM AND COMPATIBLES VERSION
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ROBIN HOGG'S PLAYING TIPS

YOUR GUIDE TO BETTER GAMING

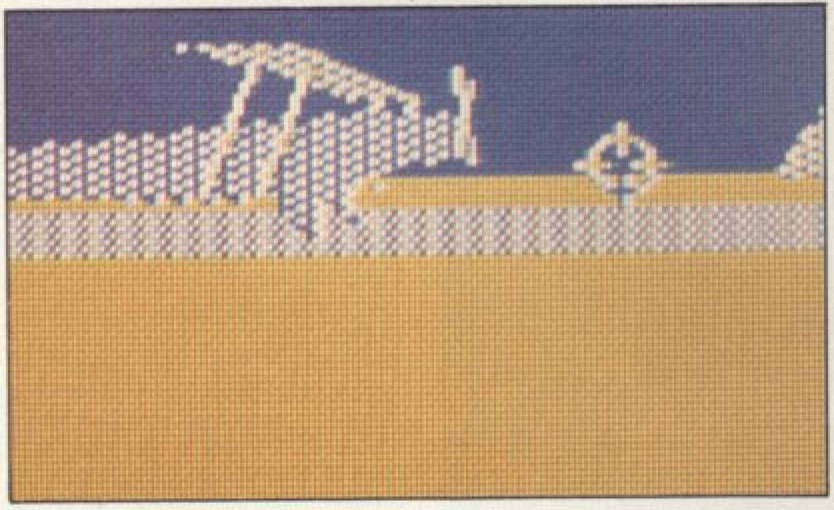
We kick off with Incentive's latest Freescape wonder, which can't be beaten for depth and has left me burning the midnight oil of many an occasion. We start with a guided tour of the pyramid, before moving on to some general play tips.

☆ TOTAL ECLIPSE

(All formats)

To get you into the game, here's a brief tour of first few chambers of the pyramid. For the tour the rooms have been abbreviated to H=HORAKHTY, P= PHARAOHS ,N= NEPHTHYS, K= KHEPRESH, thus K-E is Khepresh-E, N-E is Nephthys-E and so on.

■ Collect the ankh on board the aircraft and enter the pyramid. Collect water from the trough in the first entry chamber (H-A) and wrench the ankh from the wall. In H-B shoot the small cube to bring down the stairs which allows access to H-G. Inside H-G is a poison arrow firing coffin, a water trough and a treasure chest. Shoot the lid to close the coffin, collect the treasure and water (if needed)



and then crouch to get past the barrier blocking the left-hand door. In H-D shoot the barrier several times to remove it and then leave via the western door up the stairs (the east door is blocked to begin with).

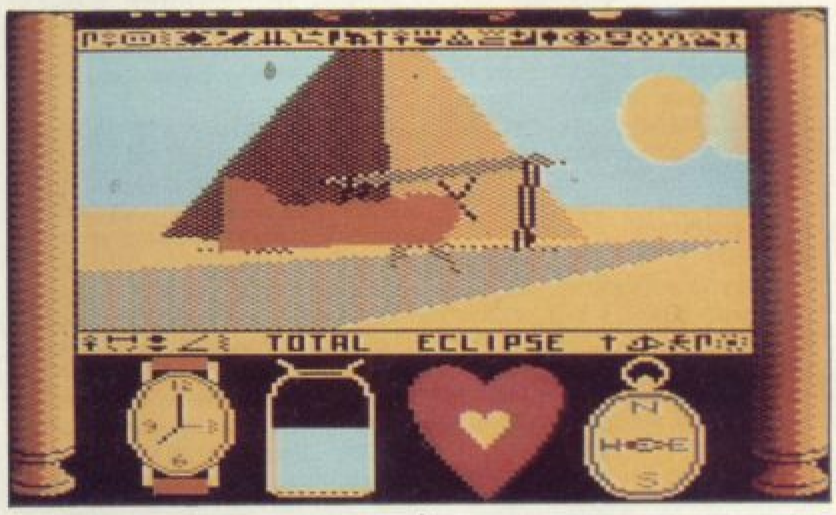
■ In H-C you can take a paddle in the pool, shoot the arrow and go through the Northern door (the thin one). In K-E you'll be confronted by a coffin on the ground and treasure next to it – don't be greedy and walk forward as it puts the coffin upright and starts firing. Instead turn right and go up the steps.

■ The next room (K-F) is filled to the brim with poisonous gases so move through it as quick as possible. The room itself is deviously designed with the far wall having an unseen gap. To get through head for the north-east corner then turn east and head to the wall, now turn north, go forward and then turn west and you should see the door out of the room.

After leaving the room take a rest to calm your beating heart in room K-C. Move around the edge of the chamber to the west door and through into K-B. Choose the left hand door and go down the steps and get the treasure from room K-E. Go back to K-B and through the west door to arrive in the throne room (K-A). Here you can observe the bird glyph on the wall and sit on the throne which will tip you back into N-C and a new set of chambers.

Turning right in this room takes the explorer into a chamber (N-E) where a platform rests on a pivot. Shooting the platform swivels it through 90°. Move onto it with three large step size moves followed by three small size step moves and you should be facing the east door, now shoot the platform below you and it should turn round allowing you to leave the room and enter chamber N-F. Here just shoot the block next to the bird glyph and the fixed barrier ahead of you will disappear.

Alternatively going left from chamber N-F takes the player into N-A. Move fast through this room (to lessen the damage from the poison dart firing coffin sitting on the stairs), and take the right hand stairs out. In the next room N-B, turn right, move round the corner



and. . . . I'll leave it at that as Ian Andrews may not be too happy if I carry on!

■ There is an entrance round the other side of the pyramid although it doesn't go very far inside and a beginner shouldn't bother with it.

■ Don't forget that the final objective of the shrine chamber is at a height of 72 cubits within the pyramid. Although progression upwards is the ultimate objective, many of the puzzles require the explorer to move downwards to complete them.

■ Ankhs are the keys to success so collect them wherever they are to be seen. A key is found in the aircraft at the start, another in H-J, yet another in H-E and one more for luck hanging by a string from the ceiling in P-F - shoot it down to get it. Another Ankh further on is in K-E (24c but it is down at the bottom of the chamber and difficult to get at).

■ Move up to the wall in H-H and it crumbles away (the footprints stopping at the wall give this one away)

■ In H-I shoot the pole several times to bring down the treasure chest it is holding up.

■ Shoot the eyes in H-C and H-E to make a match which unblocks the western door at the top of the stair (subsequently leading to P-F).

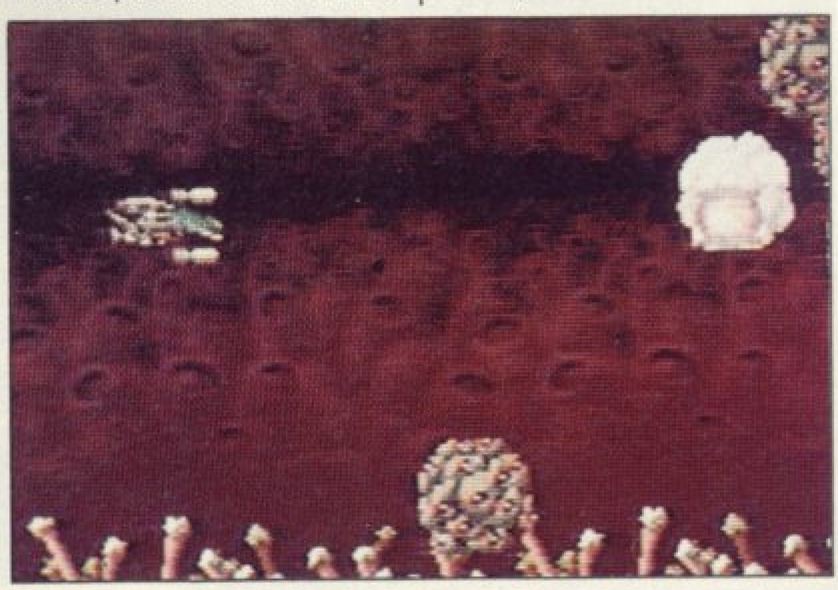
☆ R-TYPE II

(PC Engine)

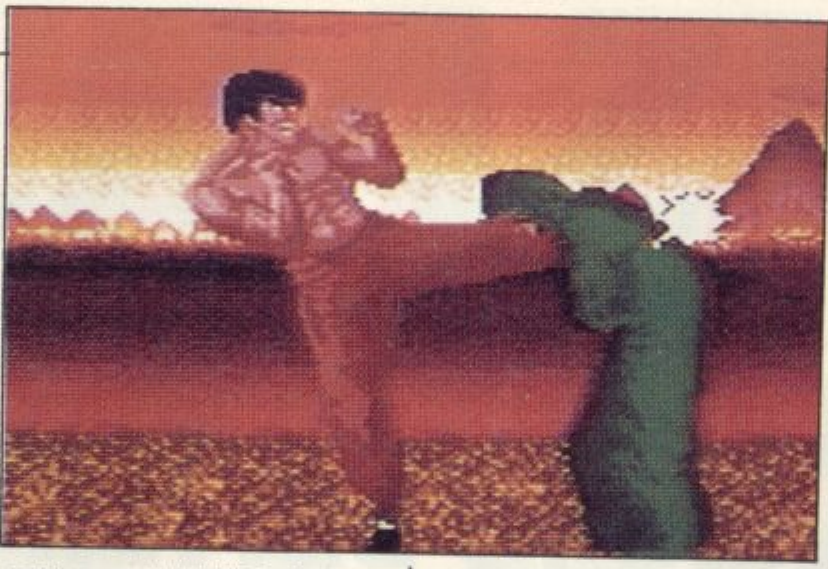
Not much of a tip for this near-perfect rendition of the coin-op other than:

■ Play the coin-op to gain experience, and

■ Kill the first two lizard type creatures and *don't* shoot the rest. Even in death the lizards are lethal and cause more trouble than they're worth since their bodies explode throwing bits everywhere. Go for the smaller bullet-firing homing aliens instead.



PRESS ANY KEY



☆ **DRUNKEN MASTER**
(PC Engine)

■ For the first four end-level opponents a continuous volley of punches should do the trick with a kick or two to keep your console opponent guessing. Anyone know how to get past the fifth opponent?

■ Flying fireballs can be extinguished with a crouching punch. From the fourth level onwards the flying saucers (not the UFO type, the crockery type!) break open if left to their own devices – to get rid of them quickly move forward and do a high punch.

☆ **FERNANDEZ MUST DIE**
(ST/Amiga)

■ To get loads of soldiers (an infinite number in fact) start the game, pause it and type in **SPINYNORMAN** (no space), then restart the game. Fernandez is now dead!

☆ **R.C. PRO-AM**
(Nintendo)

■ When you get a game written by Rare, you know it's something really special. For those of you getting to grips with it, (or not as the case may be) a game like this deserves tips, so here they are.

■ Don't bother going for the letters making up NINTENDO if they're out of your way. The computer controlled drone cars can catch up and overtake you extremely quickly.

■ In races with only a few laps your only option is to go flat out. Lose your position in a short race and you'll find it difficult to catch up unless you've got some weapons on board.

■ Go for the roll cages and missiles first. Backward-firing bombs don't help much if you're in last place.

■ Remember the layout of the tracks and the positions of zippers, roll cages and the other items - use them to full effect as the other drone cars won't hesitate to use them either.



■ If the race is going badly and you're in last position with under a lap to go, use up as many missiles and bombs on the enemy (providing you can catch up with them), it doesn't matter if you come third (unless you're a perfectionist) as long as you get through to the next race that's all that matters.

☆ **CYBERNOID**
(ST/AMIGA)

A mega shoot-em-up if ever there was one. To totally beat the aliens into submission and get you in the mood for the forthcoming *Cybernoid 2* from Hewson try this infinite lives cheat.

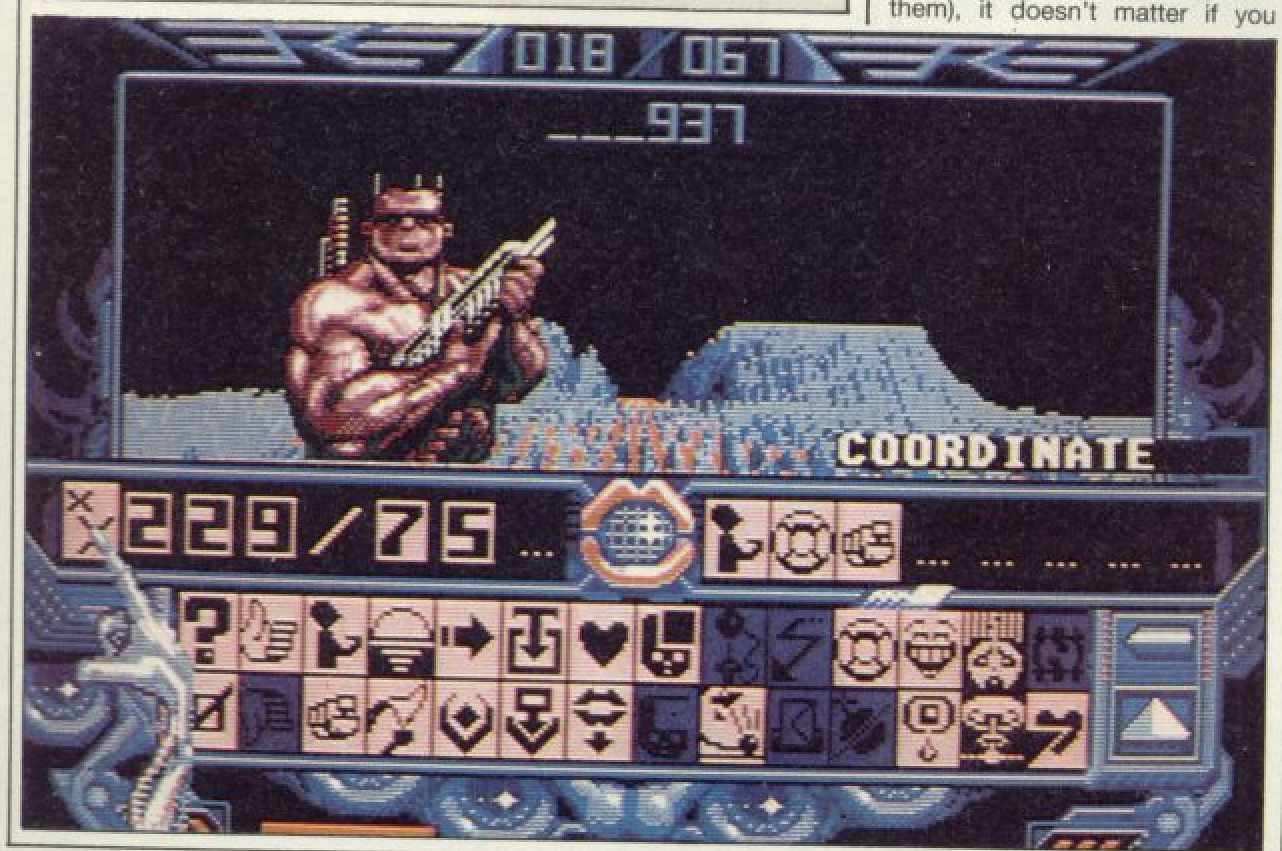
■ On the title screen press the Space Bar, type in **RAISTLIN** and press the Space Bar once more for luck. Voila – infinite Cybernoid ships.



☆ **CYBERNOID 2**
(Spectrum/C64)

An old cheat but one that's been floating around the office looking lonely so here we are.

■ On the Spectrum type in **YGRO** on the redefine keys screen, on the same screen on the C64 type in **ORGY** (the other way round wouldn't you know).



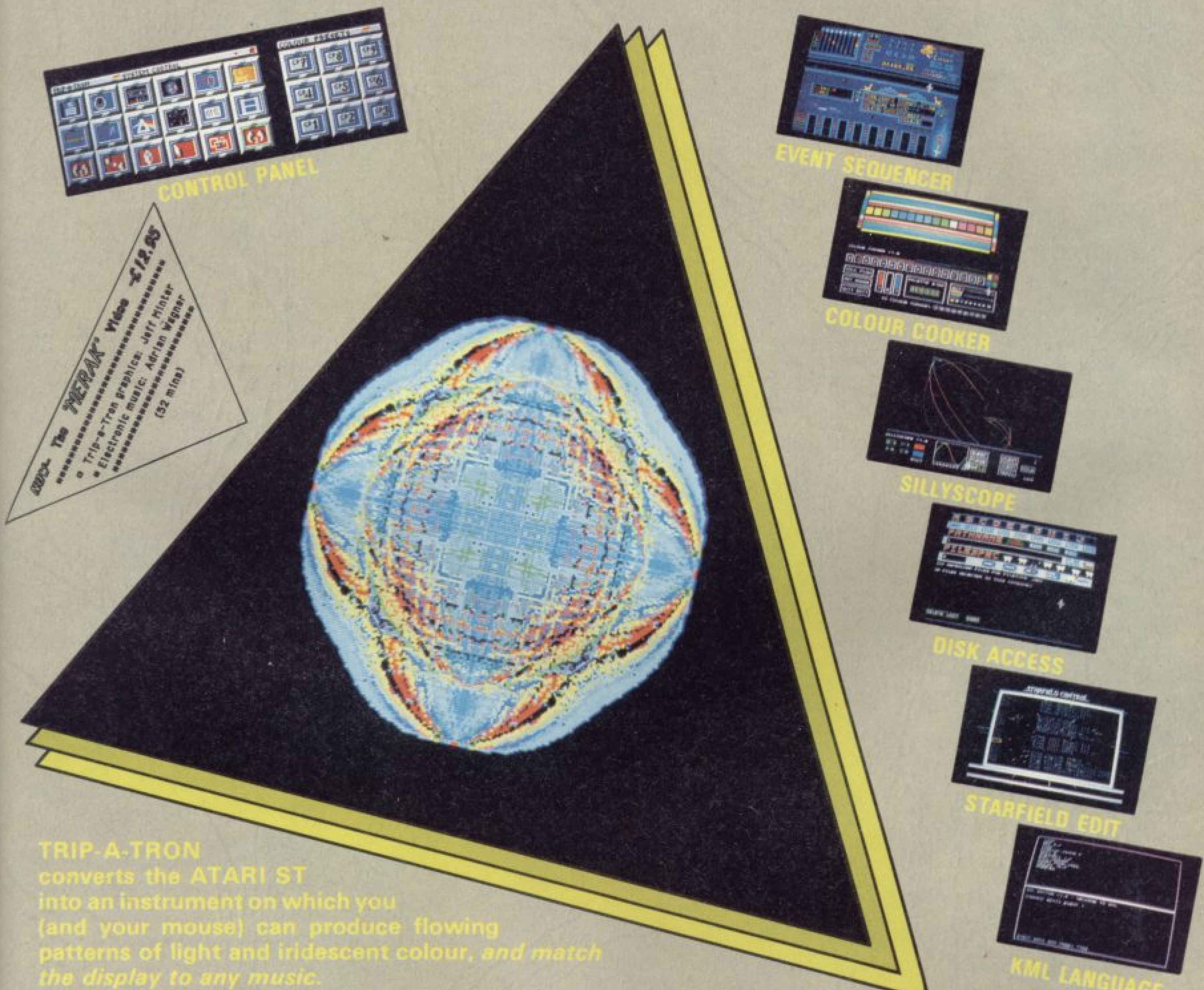
☆ **CAPTAIN BLOOD**
(All formats)

■ When you encounter a particularly friendly alien, ask it the following question using the alien icons: **CODE GG 1**. The alien will then give you the co-ordinates of another alien called GG. Go to the specified planet and you can then ask GG for the co-ordinates of all the other aliens around by asking **CODE INFORMATION HELP**. If you're met with blind ignorance then put in the name of an alien after the HELP.

Right that's all you're getting this month. Send those tips, maps and cheats for all the latest games to PLAYING TIPS at the usual address: **THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB.* £40 worth of software of your choice could be yours for the price of a stamp. Now that's *got* to be worth a shot.**

Trip-A-Tron

LIGHT SYNTHESISER



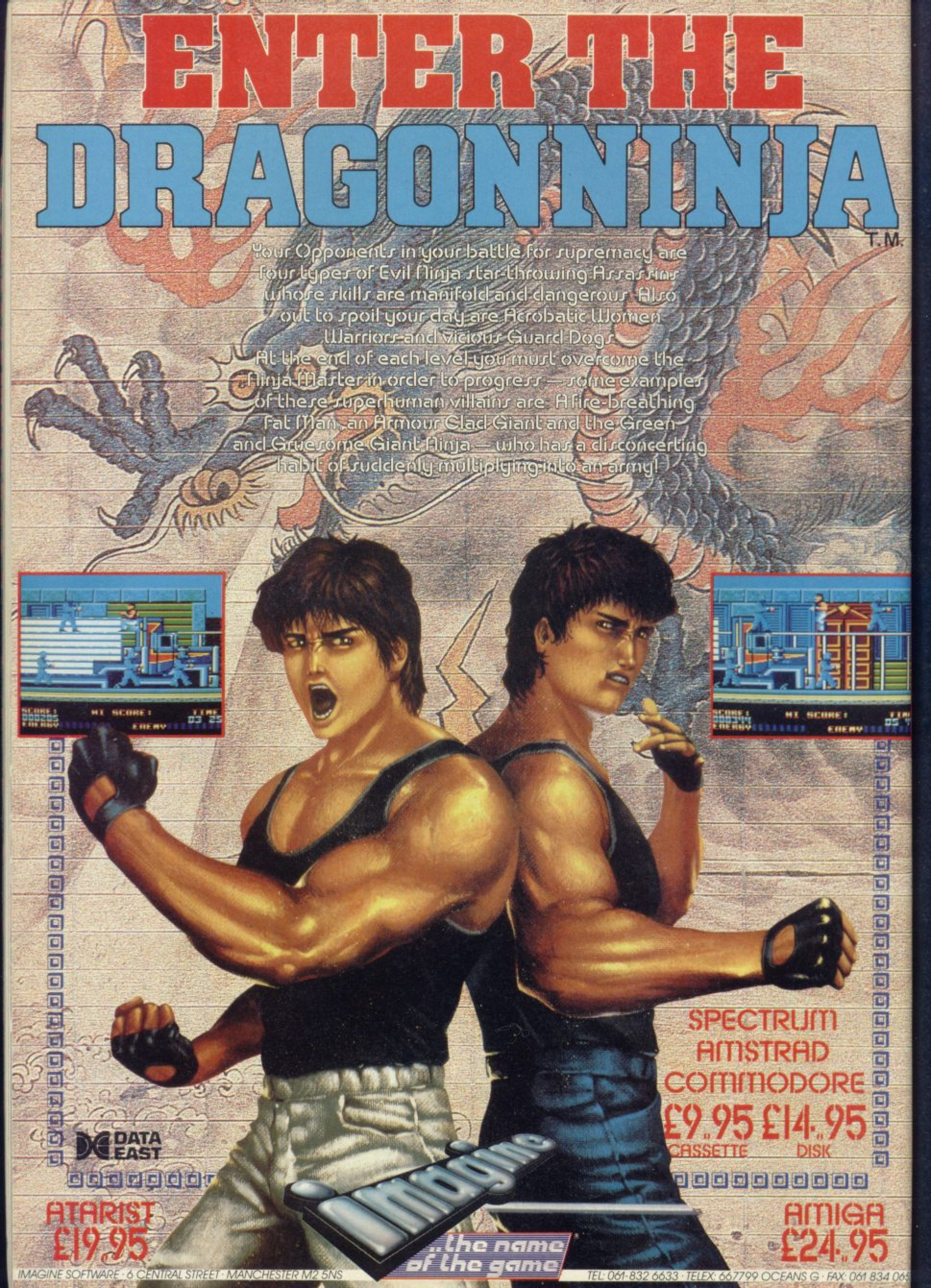
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THE RESULT is fascinating - pleasure enhanced by knowing that
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SOON THE LIGHT-SYNTHESIST COULD BE UP THERE WITH THE GUITAR HEROES.

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Lurking horrors

CTHULHU BY GASLIGHT

Roleplaying Supplement
Chaosium, £11.95

Jack the Ripper is only one of the menaces stalking the fog-shrouded streets of 1889 London. The folk of this bustling Victorian metropolis, heart of the mighty British Empire, hurry about their daily business knowing nothing of the sinister horrors that are at work in the dingiest back-streets and darkest alleys. Dare you brave nameless terrors to delve further into these dark secrets and perhaps to cross paths with the dread minions of Great Cthulu itself? Draw your cape around you against the chill of the night, strain your ears for approaching fog-muffled footsteps (or sinister slitherings) and with a hand on your trusty service revolver, read on . . .

Few roleplayers would deny that Chaosium's *Call of Cthulu* is a classic game - not for the elegance of its rule system, which can't be described as anything better than functional, but for the totally compelling nature of its setting.

The game is based around H.P.Lovecraft's tales of cosmic horrors such as Azathoth, Great Cthulu and Nyarlathotep - alien beings of enormous power which, though currently unable to act directly on Earth, nevertheless exert their malign influence through the agencies of both lesser alien servitors and human cultists.

Players in *Call of Cthulu* take the role of investigators who are drawn in some way to probe further into some mischief inspired by such beings. As they gradually realise the true monstrosity of the threat their sanity itself is inevitably worn away . . .

A good Cthulu campaign is a delghtfully terrifying experience as seemingly ordinary events lead the investigators further and further into the supernatural.

One shortcoming of the basic *Call of Cthulu* game is that it is set, like the books upon which it is based, in the United States of the 1920's. This presents no problems for the player or referee who is very familiar with Lovecraft's works and knows at least something of this era of history, but not everyone falls into this category. *Cthulu by Gaslight* provides a way around this by providing just about every detail a referee might need to run a Cthulu adventure in the England of the 1890's – a setting familiar to most of us through the exploits of Sherlock Holmes. Together in a single volume these are attractively set out and atmospherically illustrated throughout, including some outstanding colour plates.

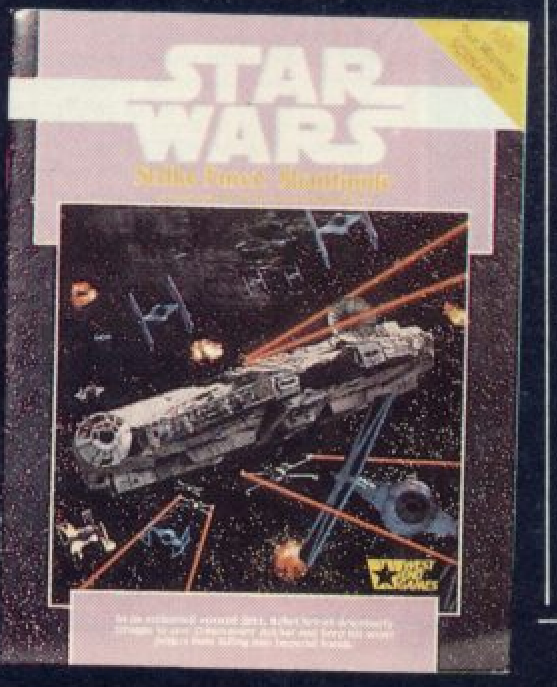
The book begins by introducing a few new rules for the conversation from 1920's to 1890's, principally dealing with the different occupations available to player characters (consulting detective, street arab and aristocrat, for instance) and with differences in weapons technology between the two eras. Following this a 40 page background section gives a quick outline of the world political situation of the era, with thumbnail biographies of leading figures such as Sir Richard Francis Burton, Benjamin Disraeli and Sir Henry Irving; important London locations such as New Scotland Yard and the Records Office, and a map of the British Museum – a treasure house for investigators of the paranormal! Further background detail includes a description of the criminal underworld and occult societies of the age, means of transport and a price list of dozens of common and not-so-common items.

Next come a number of suggestions for means of time travel to incorporate within a Cthulu campaign – very useful for transporting characters from existing 1920's adventures into the 1890's setting. The remaining pages are taken up by *The Yorkshire Horrors*, a complete 1890's adventure featuring the great Sherlock Holmes himself, his arch-adversary Moriarty, dark deeds in the wilds of Yorkshire and some wonderfully nasty rat creatures.

Author William Barton has done a great job of transposing the Lovecraftian atmosphere to its new setting. Cthuloid horror is all the more compelling when worked out against a backdrop familiar to us all from films, books and television. How better to while away the long, dark winter evenings than by exploring the lurking terrors of Victorian London? Thoroughly recommended for anyone who likes the idea of horror roleplaying in the footsteps of Sherlock Holmes. But remember - the tentacles of the Deep Ones are everywhere . . .



Now a quick look at West End Games *Strike Force: Shantipole* (32pp, £6.95) a *Star Wars* RPG supplement. This adventure sets an intrepid rebel band the task of safely escorting the prototype of a newly-developed alliance starfighter from the Roche asteroid field through an imperial blockade to the safety of the rebel base.



The pack follows what's becoming the established format for Star Wars scenarios: a simple, all-action plot ranging from starships duelling through the asteroid field to underground fire-fights with stormtroopers; a handy pull-out section with NPC details and other referee materials, a large full-colour map of the area of the main action, and counters to enable the climactic battle to be fought out with the *Star Warriors* space combat rules if desired. Hours of fast-moving fun, though perhaps rather a slim booklet for the money.



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VELODROME SPRINT CYCLING will see you locked in a tough physical and psychological battle. And then perhaps the most nerve jangling event of all — SPRINGBOARD DIVING. You'll really need to psych yourself up for this one!
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PLAY IT AGAIN!

S-s-s-**samplers** are the ultimate micro musician's tool – and they usually have ultimate prices. But now one of the best is available on the ST for under £80. Jon Bates takes notes.

Like the Volkswagen Beetle, Microdeal's *Replay* has undergone many upgrades and changes. But version 4 is a superlative ST sampling package – more a Jag than a Beetle – outstripping all the earlier versions and definitely worth more than a quick look at £79.95. Besides software, it includes hardware that fits into the ST's left-hand cartridge slot, providing in and out phono sockets for audio connections.

Loading the new *Replay* gets you the main screen. Across the top half of the screen is a line that will turn itself into graphic representation of the sampled sound; you then chop up the sound, using two vertical cursor lines to select the area to work on. The edit window is also used for showing a few other functions such as SCOPE, SPECTRUM and the list of samples in the memory.

You set the sampling rate (5-50kHz) from the menu bar, and also choose where you want the sound to be played back. *Replay* won't allow you to choose a high sampling rate if the sound is to come through the monitor speaker – but you wouldn't want to hear it through the monitor anyway, as it's really tinny.

You can also set the trigger sensitivity, so that *Replay* will only start to sample above a certain input volume level – useful when working with noisy sound sources like old tapes or records. It means you don't waste chunks of memory recording hiss and crackle.

Get through these options, play a James Brown tape (say) into the hardware using the phono-in socket, and press the S key (or, if you're using a mouse, click on SAMPLE). On the 1040 STFM at a rate of 20kHz I found it could take about 45 seconds of music, which isn't bad going – and certainly enough to manufacture several chart hits.

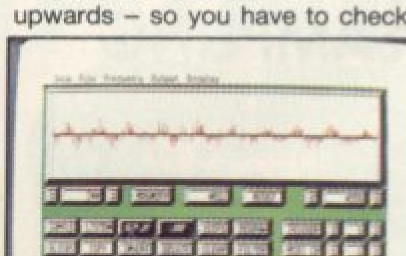
Editing in detail

The whole of the sample is shown in the edit window, and now it's down to editing. Move the cursors to the part of the sound you want to concentrate on, and click on MAGNIFY. Now the whole screen is filled with the selected sample, and you can repeat the process of zooming in on areas of sound and magnifying them.

Using this process, areas of sound can be magnified up to 600 times their original onscreen size – ample for cutting out unwanted bits.

Editing itself has several options. You can clear a section marked by the cursors, leaving it blank or bringing in a block from another part of the sample.

But this shuffles the memory upwards – so you have to check to



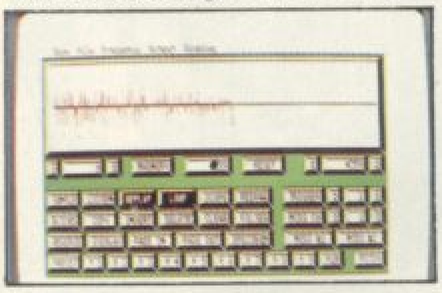
see if there's anything important at the end of the whole sample, or you'll lose it as it falls off the end of the memory, so to speak.

Any part of the sample can of course be reversed – in this mode, James Brown does a passing impersonation of a Soviet newscaster. BLOCK means that anything between the cursors is kept to be copied anywhere. If you press INSERT twice, the block will insert itself twice – this is how the 'n-n-n-' sound in Paul

Hardcastle's *19* is done.

There doesn't appear to be any way you can move a part of the sample – that is, cut it out completely and paste it elsewhere. Instead, you have to go back to the original of the copied block and delete it. The system isn't very helpful when memory is limited.

Instead of copying chunks of the samples, you can overlay one part of the sample on top of another. The result is interesting, but it does tend to



muffle both samples and knock the overall volume of each sample section by half. There is also a fade-in and fade-out option for any part of any sample; you can set the length of the fade.

To set the input volume you have SCOPE, which provides a visual display of the input signal. The trick is to set the level on your sound source so it just touches the upper and lower edges of the edit window.

Not so useful is the SPECTRUM feature, which gives a jolly, moving visual display of the harmonics of the input sound. Pretty, but then again pretty useless.

MIDI relations

One interesting thing about *Replay* version 4 is that it responds to MIDI – not fully, but enough to make it a useful extension to a home studio set-up.

Any sample can be played back from a MIDI keyboard in the pitch of the key depressed. The sad thing is that the sample doesn't stop playing when you take your finger off the key; the program is not set to respond to MIDI note-off information.

It doesn't respond to pitch bend or touch-sensitivity either, though even if it did you'd need more than one processor to cope with all that information.

Replay can store up to ten samples at any one time, set to trigger from a particular MIDI note – depressing the note on a MIDI keyboard plays the sample. If you haven't got a MIDI keyboard to hand you can use the ST's function keys the same way.

Fixing samples to notes or the function keys causes a library overlay to appear over the edit window, listing the samples, the names you've given them and the memory used. One word of warning here: when you save a sample to disk, *Replay* only saves the data shown on the edit screen. This is not explained in the manual.

Samples and MIDI set keys can be saved individually or as a set.

Quietly amazing

Overall, *Replay* version 4 is pretty quiet in operation, and considering that it processes the samples in 8-bit chunks it's pretty amazing. Apart from a few minor quibbles, and they *are* minor, I'd say it's worthwhile for any ST user.

"James Brown played backwards sounds like a Soviet newscaster"

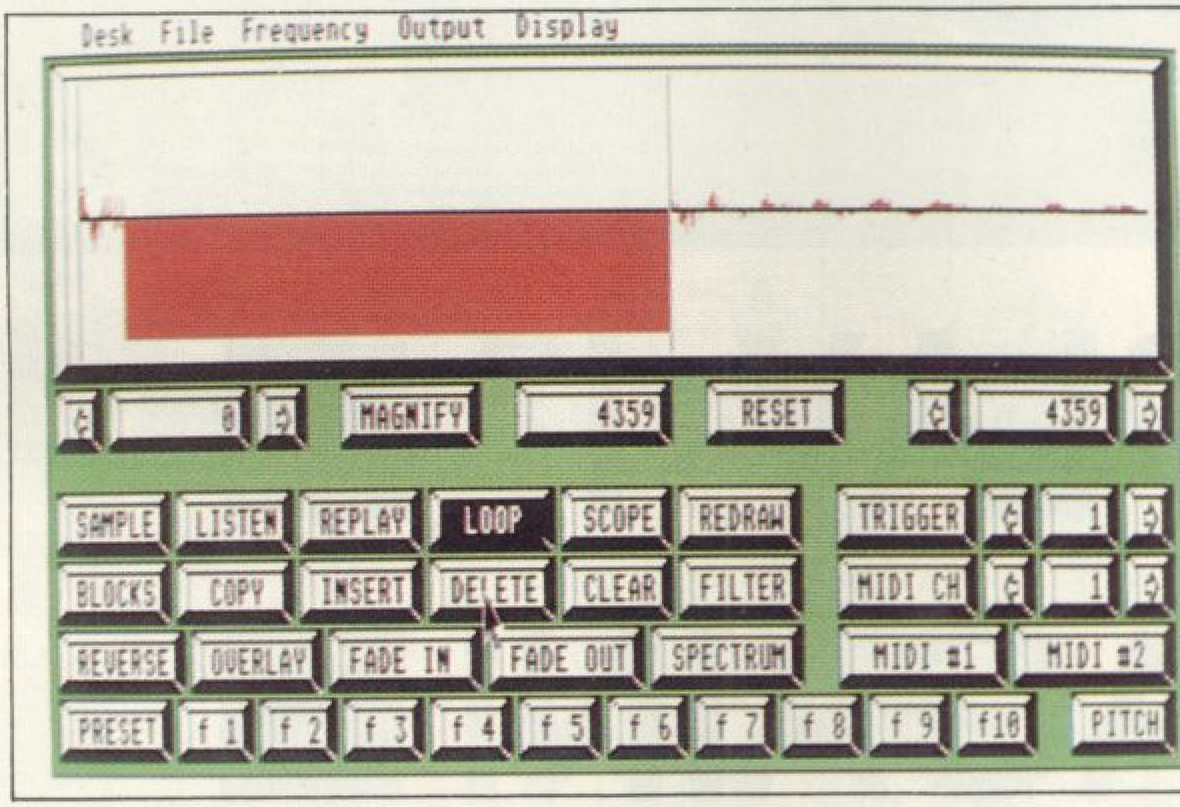
While it doesn't have all the features of a professional £3,000 sampler, *Replay* has enormous advantages: it's very visual and easy to understand and use, and gives a decent sound.

And as if this weren't enough, the disk includes a digital drum-kit system with full sequencing and sampling features, plus a good sound-effects program.

Programmers will be pleased that the manual contains full technical details of the memory addresses and the sample data format, and the disk also contains a BASIC folder so that samples can be played back via BASIC programs – inserted into games, etc.

Replay version 4 is a definite winner at £79.95 – try it now.

Microdeal: *PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4YB* ☎ (0726) 68020.



INSIDE SAMPLING

We all dimly remember 'n-n-n-nineteen' blurting out of our radio speakers a few years back. This spawned a whole host of records that had part of a word repeated, and the overexposed acid house genre also uses sampling about 95% of the time – musicians sample from other records and put together a collage of the bits to create a new track.

The results can be interesting, but are often boring; like any other music technology, sampling is only as good as the user.

Sampling is rather like taking a high-speed cine film of a sound. Cine film consists of a set of still pictures which create the illusion of action when they're flashed through quickly, in order.

The eye is quite easily deceived by about 8 frames (pictures) per second, though the result is a little bit jerky; movies are made at 24 frames per second.

But your ears are not so easily deceived. At about 5,000 digital 'sound pictures' per second, the results are only just about convincing; to start getting what you want you need something like 20,000 per second.

And this is what sampling software does. It chops up the sound into thin slices, converts them into digital pictures of the sound, and then files each slice away in RAM. Micros can then retrieve the data ultraquickly from any starting point and in any order.

Playing with sound

That's how 'n-n-n-nineteen' is achieved. Either you tell the sampling device to read the beginning of the sound a certain number of times, or you define the sector to be repeated and copy it a few times onto the front of the sound.

But because the ear is hard to fool, any half-decent sampler will need a routine that smooths the passage from one slice to the next, otherwise steps can be heard in the sound. This sound-smoothing is known as quantising (not to be confused with the same term used in sequencers).

There are many other things to look out for in a sampler, such as sample rate.

A sound consists of a 'fundamental' tone, plus a mass of harmonics – higher tones. If the upper harmonics are not reproduced, the result is muffled and woolly. The pitch of any tone can be measured by the sound wave's frequency in kilohertz (kHz).

The rate at which the sampler takes 'snaps' of the sound – the sample rate – is pretty well double that of the highest harmonic it can produce. The human ear can normally hear sounds up to about 16 kHz, and so a sampler that runs at 32kHz or more is going to give a much better sound.

Well, it will theoretically – but not if the components themselves are noisy and prone to removing bits of the sound.

All the things they do

If you want a tone to be continuous, you get the sampler to repeat the middle harmonics of the sound of, say, a violin.

To keep it repeating, you usually have to hold down a key on a keyboard or the computer. Samplers will hold a set of sounds within their memory and allow you to map them across the keyboard.

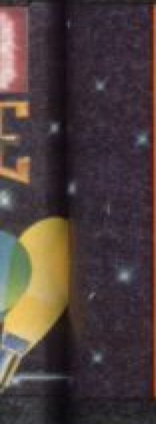
This can mean that the lower notes play one sound, the middle another, and the top notes yet another. Or you can cross-fade the samples, so that one sound gradually becomes another as you go up and down the keyboard.

Acoustic instruments change in tone as the pitch changes, and the sampler addict will spend ages editing various samples of the same instrument so that the result is a pretty lifelike imitation of the real thing. If the keyboard is touch-sensitive, the samples have to respond to this as well, which means even more work.

But dedicated samplers have one big disadvantage. The editing facilities, though usually very comprehensive, are displayed on a crummy LCD display that induces myopia and migraines within hours. Still, there are bolt-on interfaces for some that will let you edit their samples on a monitor.

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MEL' YOU GOT MY POSTCARD, THEN.. I'M IN MIAMI FOR ROGER BENNET, FINDING A GOOD LOCATION FOR THE 1990 CONFERENCE. NO, HE DOESN'T KNOW, I HAVEN'T BILLED HIM YET. SO, THE PANTO'S OUT. UNLESS IT WAS WORTH MY WHILE... SAY... ER... 10 PER CENT OF THE BOX OFFICE TAKINGS?
ONLY A TENTH? MERCY, IF YOU DO THIS, I'LL SEE TO IT THAT YOU GET A QUARTER!
HOW MUCH DID YOU OFFER MERCY?
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LITTLE RED DICK IN BOOTS & THE BEANSTALK
by Mr Croucher & Mr Evans
(All Characters portrayed are entirely fictitious, not to mention real nice folks!)
NO SMOKING
A QUARTER. NOW, WHAT'S 25 CENTS IN ENGLISH DOSH?
WIDOW TWANKY'S LAUNDRY
NIK? NIK!! WHERE IS THAT BOY?!
I'M OFF TO MARKET, MOTHER, TO SELL OUR OLD COW TO PAY THE BROKER'S MEN!
BRING BACK THE CAT!!
SPLOOSH!!
EURK!
'Twas Christmas Day in the Workhouse Without one Bite of Grub...
'Twas Hard Times in Computerland And closing time at t'Pub.
Poor Mercy Dash was strapped for cash Poor Mercy Dash was missing The snow did snow, the wind did Blow The Rain was gently something-or-other
FASTER, I SAID! OR I'LL PINCH YOU IN THE ADAM'S APPLE AGAIN!
AIRPORT
NO! ANYTHIN' BUT THAT!!
WHERE'S OUR FUTURE?
IT'S BEHIND YOU!
OH NO IT ISN'T!
OH YES IT BLADDER WELL IS!!!
The Babes in the Wood were Crying. The Wolf was at the Door
The Fairy (Good) came Flying, His legs a Trifle Raw
HI-HO, HI-HO, IT'S OFF TO BATH WE GO...
IMAGINE 3 OTHER DWARFS TOO
BLAM
POW
The Seven Dwarfs Went Singing of Other Magazines
While Dick-in-Boots and Puss-in-Smiths Got Dad the Germoline
The Ugly Sisters preened and cried: "Eat Lead, Wee Cinderella!"
While Old King Cole and Buttons said, "This script's a Right Old Smeller!"
BUTT OUT NOW, SKYBOY! IF FERGIE CAN FLY A CHOPPER I'M SURE I CAN!
AND SHE TOLD ME SHE WAS FERGIE! THOUGHT SHE WAS KINDA SHORT....
IS THIS A WALTHER PPK I SEE BEFORE ME?
TELECOMSOFT ANNUAL DINNER
Meanwhile the Cow was Lacking Her Front End, Truth to Tell
And Mother Goose went Quacking: "I'll Kill that bluddy Mel!"
SH-SH-SHOULD BE EASY N-NOW...JUST F-F-FIND THE N-NORTH P-POLE AND GET MY B-B-BEARINGS!


NICE PICTURE, EVANS
WELL-WRITTEN, CROUCHER!
ER... DO I GET ANY SAY IN THIS?
But Yuletide's for Forgiveness
And Jollity and Presents
PAXO
PHEASANTS, NOT PEASANTS!!
And Shoving Sage & Onion
Up ye Rectum of
Ye Pheasants.
SHUT YER FACE
AR, IT DEPEND IF'N YE WANT THE QUICK WAY OR THE PRETTY WAY..
SOUND FX DEPT
PUNT
HOW UTTERLY HUMILIATING!
The Bells sang out to Dick-in-Boots
"Turn" and "Turn Again"
He picked his Road, He picked his Nose
He kicked it down the Lane.
UHN...
It sprauted there & then, it Did
It shot out Leaves & Roots
It grew into a mighty Stalk
And up Climbed Dick-in-Boots
OH. HI, MAN. WELCOME TO MY CLOUD
I JUST FOLLOWED MY NOSE...
THIS IS A NOSE
And When he reached the Very Top
He met a Giant there.
A-Smoking on a funny Pipe
With flowers in his hair.
They settled down together
Like Elephant and Ant, oh
Dear, oh crumbs, oh crikey
They Retired from the Panto!
EAST CHARMING THEATRE
E.C.B.C.
DEMO
ON COMET, ON CUPID
ON BAMBI, ON THUMPER!
I'M UP IN THE WORLD
NOW I'M DOWN IN A DUMPER!
RIP RIP RIP RIP RIP RIP
And So the Cow was Never Sold
The Broker's men got Rough
YE OLDE PUFFE!
WAVE YOUR THING
The Fairy waved a Magic Wand
And Vanised with a Puff!
"LITTLE RED DICK IN BOOTS AND THE BEANSTALK"
THEATRE
SORRY! JUST SEND YOUR REPAIR AND HOSPITAL BILLS TO NEWSFIELD! GOTTA DASH! SORRY!
EEEK! A GIRL!!
SHUT YER FACE
YEAH, NOW TWIRL OUTTA HERE, CHAPS! I'M ANNEXING THIS DRESSING ROOM AS OF NOW!!
ENOUGH!
ENOUGH VULGARITY"
CRIED OU FROM ABOVE....
DON'T SLAM THIS DOOR!
THAT SOUNDS LIKE THE LAST BIT. NOW TO GO STEAL THE APPLAUSE!
HELLO, NIK. IT'S CURTAINS FOR YOU AND A CURTAIN CALL FOR ME!
"Let's wish our
Readers Happiness
and Health and
Peace and Love
"So here's to 1989
may all your dreams come true
and if you don't like Mercy,
We'd like to shout......
SLAP
MERCY! GLAD YOU GOT HERE! BUCK, PUT ON YOUR SPECIAL HEADGEAR
HEADGEAR, EH! ALL RIGHT, FOUR-EYES!
DONK
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL TYPE-CASTING!
"We do!"
(even though she's a bit of a cow!)
LAUGH IT UP. WHEN THIS CURTAIN FALLS, YOU AND CROUCHER ARE GOING TO DIE!
HIC. A SPECIAL MERRY YULE TO YO'ALL FROM ME.. EXCEPT PLEBLY. AND I HOPE HE FALLS DOWN A HOLE! HIC.

VOTE FOR THE BEST IN 1988

Computer Leisure Awards

For the first time ever, you will be able to join with the readers of many other British magazines to decide who and what was best in 1988. Awards will be made to software producers resulting from your voting through, this, your own magazine, for what you considered to be the best games you have played on your computer during the past year.

Many other magazines are carrying this voting form. It means the results will truly be democratic, and therefore really mean a lot to those who receive them.

The votes will be collated by an independent company, to whom you should post your voting form, and the awards will be presented at the Computer Leisure Industry's 'get together' — Computer Arena — in March 1989.

So, simply fill-in the voting form below, cut it out (or photocopy it) and send it to:

GAMES OF THE YEAR
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1) Please tick the computer format you are voting for:

- AMIGA ☐
- AMSTRAD CPC ☐
- ELECTRON ☐
- COMMODORE 64/128 ☐
- PC COMPATIBLES ☐
- ATARI ST ☐
- SPECTRUM ☐

3) Please state what you consider to be the **BEST GAME OVERALL** of 1988:

4) Which Software House do you choose as being the most consistent in producing high quality computer games during 1988:

2) Please name your choice of best game (from the format ticked above) of 1988:

1. **Best ARCADE game**
2. **Best ADVENTURE game**
3. **Best STRATEGY/WAR game**
4. **Best MUSIC with game**
5. **Best USE OF GRAPHICS**

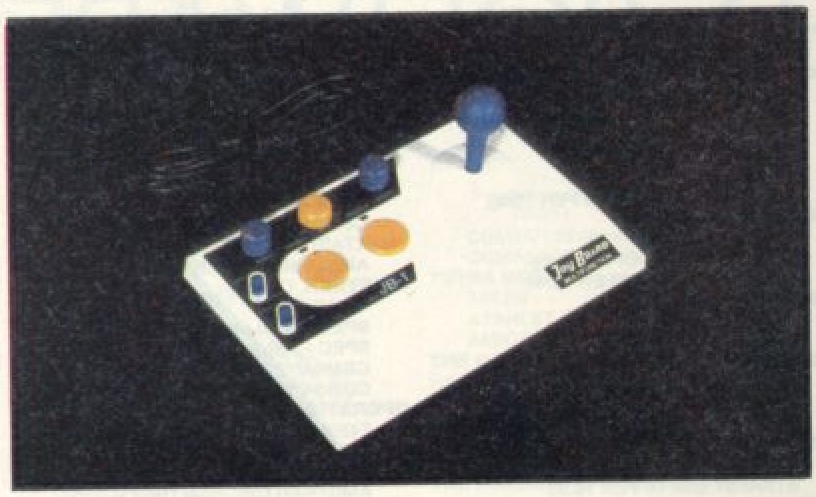
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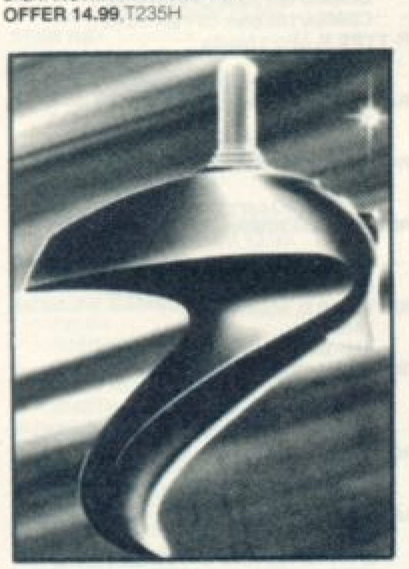
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The Games machine SHOPPING



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This super control console provides you with every possible firing and movement option. Directional control is switchable between microswitch-action joystick and two games paddles. Firing can be activated with two large fire buttons and Auto Fire features variable frequency setting. Two LED's indicate firing action. Suitable for VC20, C64, C128, C128D and Amiga 500.
EUROMAX JOY BOARD
OFFER 19.95, T248H

KONIX NAVIGATOR
Brand new ergonomically designed hand-held joystick with Fire button positioned directly beneath the trigger finger for super-fast reactions. Unbreakable solid steel shaft. **KONIX NAVIGATOR**
OFFER 14.99, T235H



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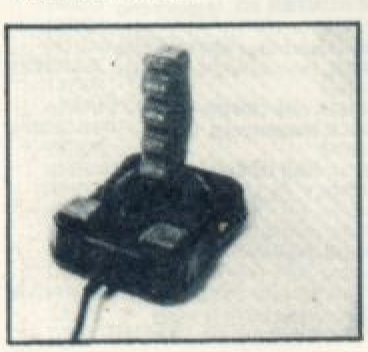
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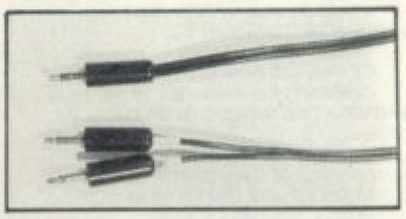


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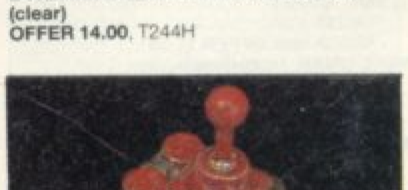
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TX:008 July 1988

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TX:009 August 1988

I Accuse – Mel Croucher discovers some famous films which have borrowed their themes! Disney Spells – Microdeal are selling the laser disc game Dragon's Lair! Machine Spooks – TGM investigates the computer hauntings! Deluxe Photolab reviewed!



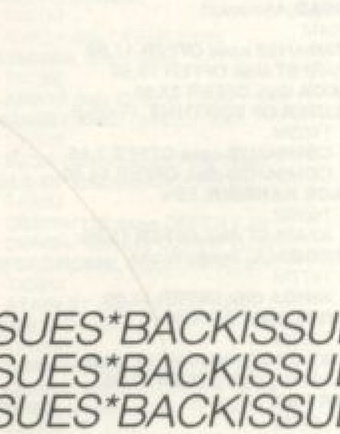
TX:010 September 1988

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TX:011 October 1988

Whatever happened to the Nintendo?! Mel Croucher investigates computer theft! Robin Candy plays Trip-a-tron with Jeff Minter's amazing new ST light synthesizer! Driving Us Crazy – Today's computerized car! Stuart Wynne talks to Interplay (Bard's Tale people)! Cyberpunk book reviews!



TX:012 November 1988

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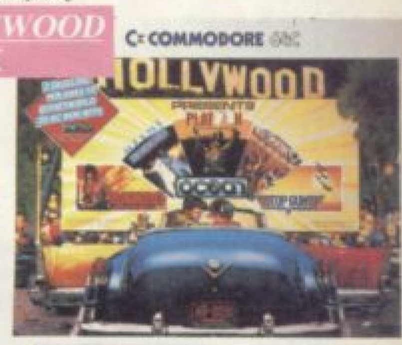
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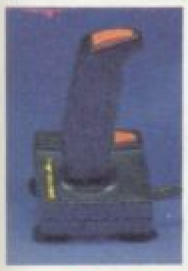
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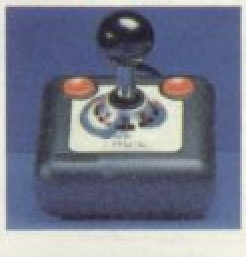
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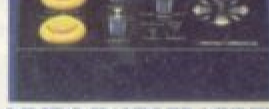




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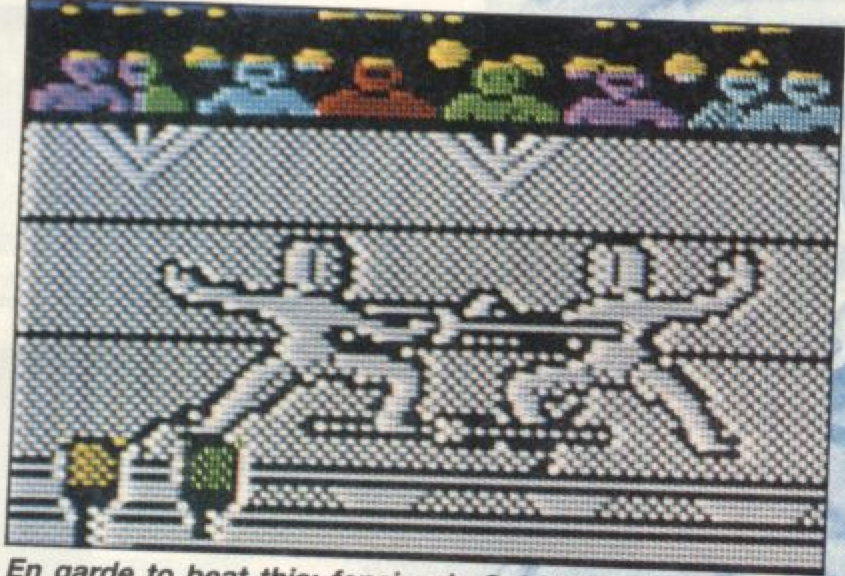
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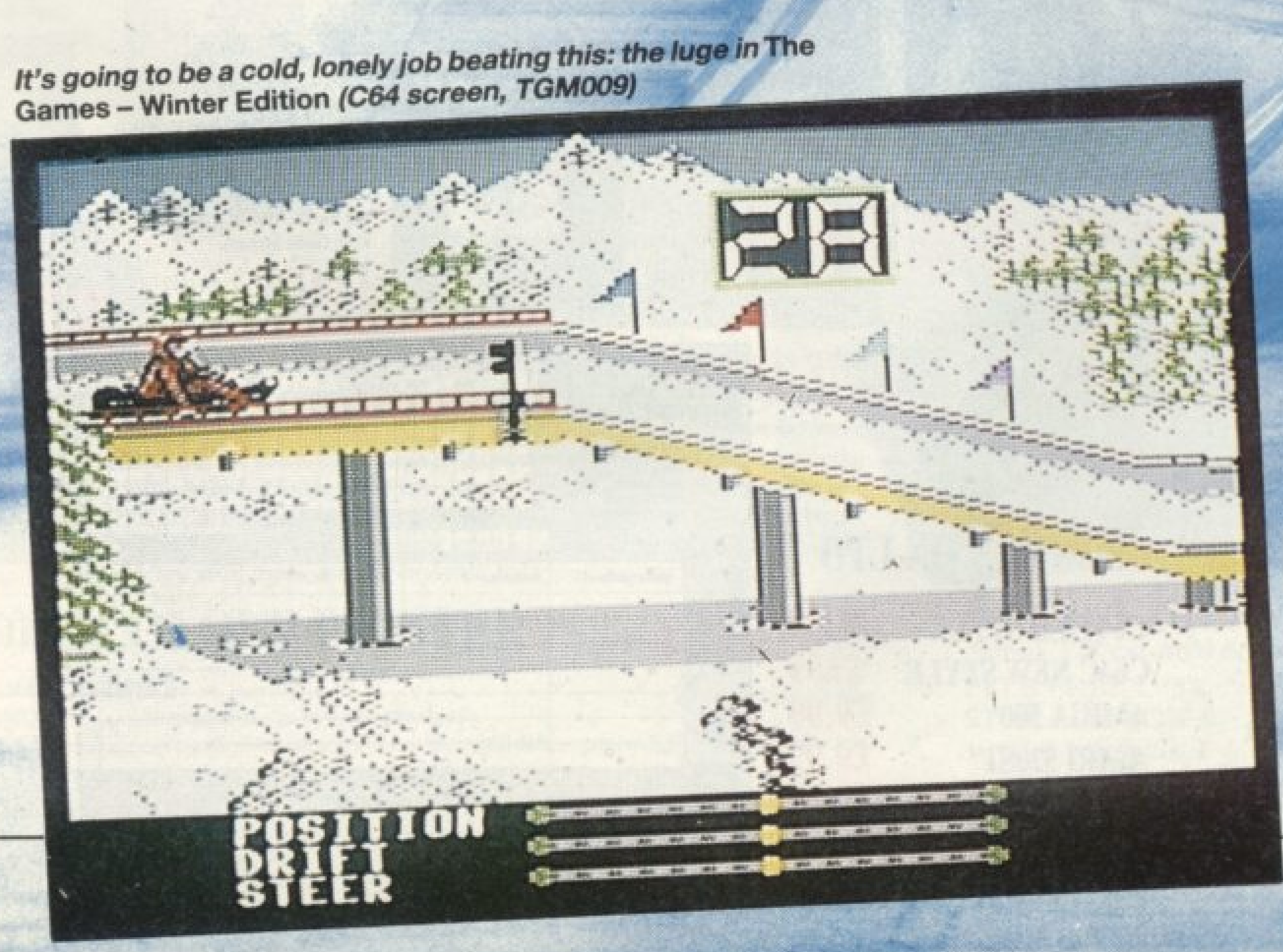
● DESIGN a game . . .

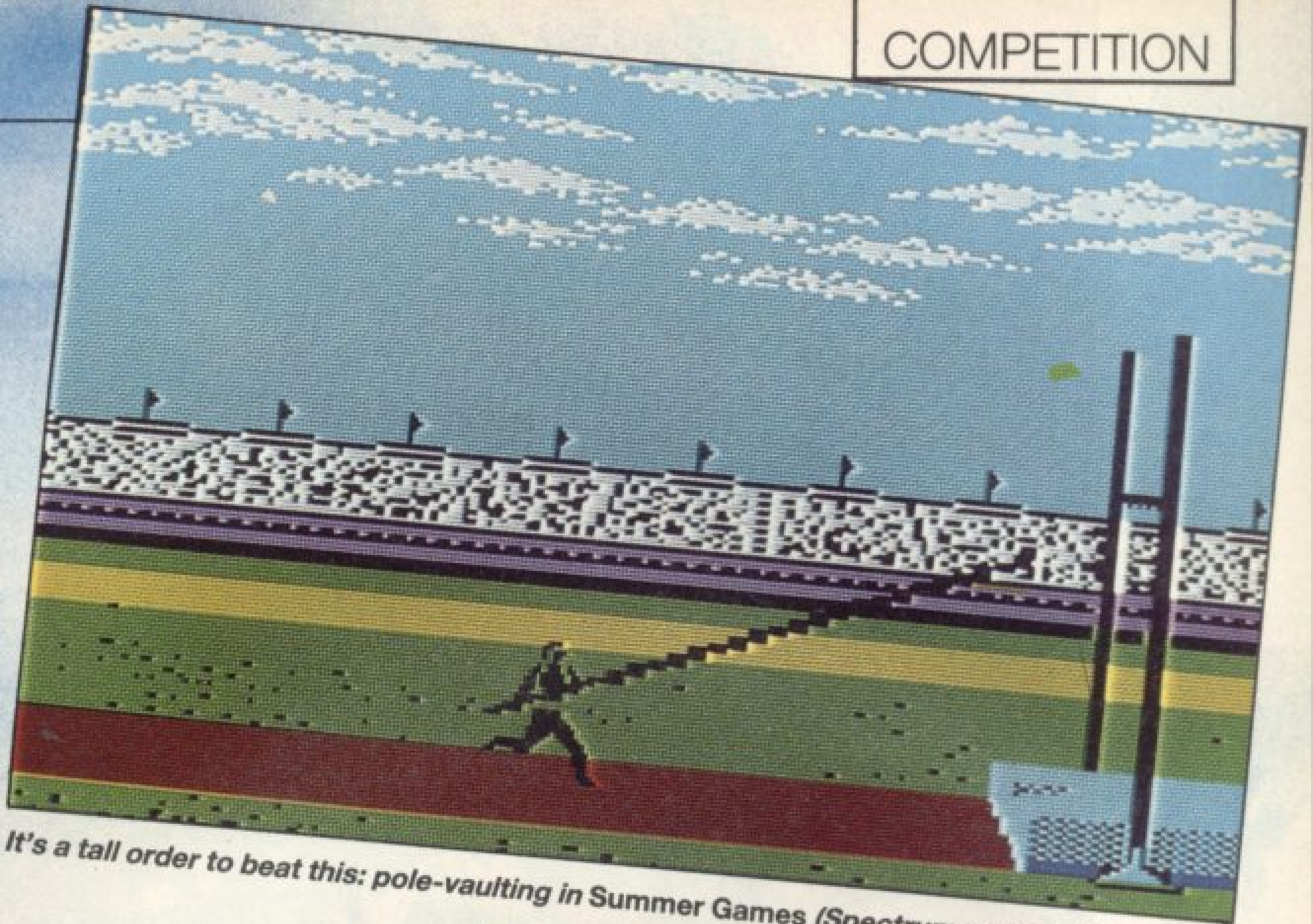


En garde to beat this: fencing in Gold Silver Bronze

● WIN an Amiga . . .

It's going to be a cold, lonely job beating this: the luge in The Games – Winter Edition *(C64 screen, TGM009)*





It's a tall order to beat this: pole-vaulting in **Summer Games** *(Spectrum screen, TGM011)*



On your marks to beat this: BMX biking in **California Games** *(C64 screen, TGM001)*

PLAY play play!

Super sports fever is back with the release of Epyx's latest Olympic-style challenge, *The Games – Summer Edition* (reviewed last issue).

We've already had the winter version, we've had *Summer Games* and *Summer Games II*, we've had *Gold Silver Bronze* . . . seven in the series, in fact.

It doesn't seem likely that Epyx will ever run out of ideas – but just to spark their sporting imaginations a bit they've decided to offer an **Amiga A500** and **20 games** to the best sports-game designers out there. And that means **you.**

Hey, machine-code maniacs, restrain yourself – Epyx don't need a finished version, all they want is the *idea* for another *Games* game.

You call the tune

You can use any theme you like – spring games, autumn games, space games, early Victorian games – so long as there are *eight* events and they're for solo athletes, not teams. (Football managers need not apply.)

Interested? Take a look at the *Games* screens here, and if you think you can match the standard, just send a description of your eight events on a postcard or the back of Barry Norman to **THE EPYX COMP, TGM,** ***PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***, to arrive by **January 15 1989**.

The best entry received by that date wins an Amiga A500, ready to play Epyx games, and the next 20 receive copies of *The Games – Summer Edition* (so don't forget to tell us what format you'd like).

Play on!

DON'T FORGET!

We bet you thought we were going to remind you about those oh-so-boring rules on the contents page. Well, you were right . . . but there's something else, doctor. **The price of postage has gone up.**

First-class stamps for an ordinary letter are now 19p, second-class are 14p. Please make sure you put the right stamp on all your letters to TGM, because otherwise we have to pay the difference, and goodness knows we're not made of money. Well, not all of us anyway.



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INFORMATION DESK

Questions aplenty as once more Robin Hogg racks his brain for answers to some of life's greatest questions.

ERIC SEMPLE of Montrose has a question about machine code programming on the Commodore 64

- For the past year I have been trying to program in machine code on the Commodore 64. Can you recommend a good book and assembler for use by beginners?

Funny you should ask at this time Eric but Leisure Genius have acquired the back catologue of New Generation Software titles – among them *The Machine Code Tutor* priced at £14.95 which should suit your needs perfectly. Contact Leisure Genius through the Virgin address. Melbourne House used to produce a series of very useful books for the Commodore 64, one of which was machine code for beginners as it is now an old stock product it would be hard to find. However, Toys 'R' Us of all places do stock it so try your local store.

Rick Wayne of West Midlands has an easily resolved problem.

- Can you tell me how to get back issues of TGM?

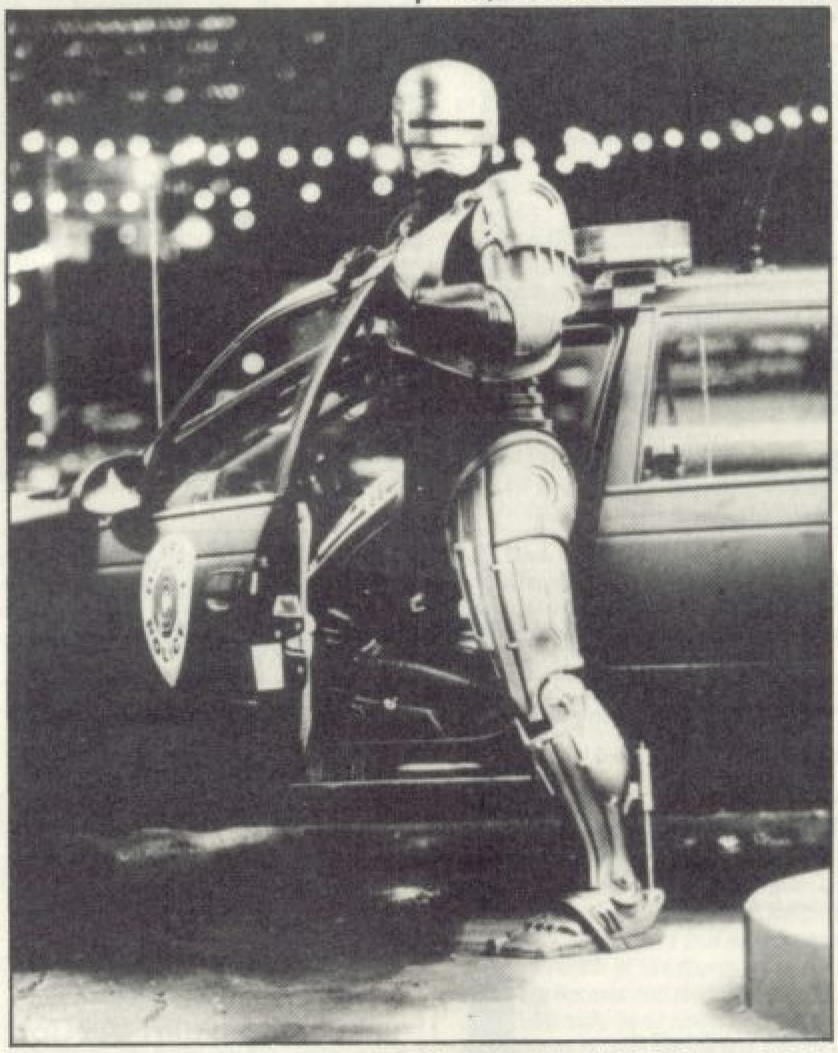
Take a look in the TGM Shopping section of this issue and lo and behold there should be a Back Numbers service. Simply ring the ones you want, send us your dosh and we'll do the rest.

Soo Bong Ang of Kensington wnats to know

- Is *RoboCop* coming out on the Sega?

Nothing is planned although it is coming soon to the Nintendo.

For those of you still searching for Laser Disk players (and still writing in asking where to get them from) why not try one of the many Radio Rallys held the UK. At a recent Radio Rally in Carmathen I spotted fully functional laser disk players selling for £12 (yes, one more than eleven!), CD players going for £90, MSX's at £50 a throw and Commodore 64's up for grabs at £45. Guarantees for the equipment are non-existent of course but the Rally dealers are generally reputable and for computers and other popular high technology goods there are be plenty of repair firms around. For Laser Disk players though it may be a little harder to find a repair firm but for £12 you can't grumble.



Mark Watson of Preston asks

- Can you tell me if there is an organization similar to the Pinball Owner's Association but dedicated to video games? I intend to buy an arcade machine and need some advice and what the pitfalls are. Buying blind could be very expensive.

There is no association as such but contacting distributors and amusement arcades themselves is your best bet. For further information why not try the classifieds in the trade paper *Coin Slot* where distributors/ manufacturers advertise their machines and PCBs (old and new). A yearly subscription is £32.00. Contact the subscriptions department through World's Fair on ☎ 061-624-3687.

David Bal of London finds EGA confusing.

- What exactly is an EGA card? What is it compatible with? How much does it cost? Is it as good as an Amiga?

EGA stands for Enhanced Graphics Adapter and is a board installed in IBM PC's and their clones. Boasting a variety of resolutions among them 640x200 resolution modes the board can display 16 colours at any one time. Priced at anything from just under £100 to a coupleof thousand (depending on the capabilities of the board) EGA is well worth fitting to a PC. Not as good in use of colours (16 compared with the Amiga's 32 minimum, and 4096 maximum) EGA does add a lot to PC games when the program takes it into consideration (example games include *The Games: Summer Edition*, *Gunship*, *Elite* and *Sentinel Worlds* which is reviewed this issue).

Anthony O'Brien of Merseyside wants to know the truth about the CD scare stories.

- How many minutes can you fit on a compact disc? Are they as tough as people make out? Do CD's deteriorate with age and use? Which two companies invented CD's – Philips and Sony? Does the laser emit radiation?

CDs are very tough and can withstand a lot of punishment (although they are *not* unbreakable and using them as frisbees is not advisable). Certain scare stories which have emerged recently regarding the ink on CDs eating away at the disc don't hold up considering the fact that CD's are still a new concept. Philips and Sony have been leaders in the CD field since it first began with Philips bringing out the first CD based on the now defunct video disk technology.

Christopher Phillips of Stocksfield wants to know

- Are there any inexpensive *Mini Office* style programs for the Amiga? Is the Brother M-1109 compatible with the Amiga? It has serial and centronics ports.

A *Mini Office* style series of packages are to be released early next year for the ST and Amiga. Each package (word processor, communications software, spreadsheet, database, etc) will cost around £24.95 and come as seperate programs. Providing you've got the relevant serial/centronics leads, yes (see your local dealer or computer store).

Thomas Johnson of Newcastle says

- I have a damaged Kempston printer interface - where can I get it repaired?

Try The Computer Shop at 7 High Friars, Eldon Square, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE1 7XG (☎ 0670-351727), they are agents for Microbase a local repair service so why not give them a try.

And finally Following on from the PC Engine question in last month's Information Desk the Engine will run on the British electricity supply with an A/C adaptor such as the type sold through the electrical components firm Maplin (☎ 01-748-0926) - price £2.99. Micro Media who supply the Engine in the UK sell the console with a PAL format or SCART interface. Well now you know.

Don't keep those questions to yourself, send 'em off to INFORMATION DESK and, who knows, you might even get an answer! No persoanl replies can be given, so please don't send SAE's. Write to: INFORMATION DESK, THE GAMES MACHINE, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.*

READERPAGE

"To earn a wage gives you a feeling of satisfaction, instead of doing nothing thinking because I'm disabled why should I go to work?"

Simon Glister of Southampton scoops this months £80 software jackpot with some comments that we could all learn from

IN PRAISE OF CYBERNAUTS

Dear Games Machine
Go and pat Mel Croucher on the back, please. Why? Well, for the brilliant piece of journalism on the cybernauts and the fact that if it wasn't for the silicon chip they and I would just be sat at home watching the television. Let me tell you a story.

I am 19 years of age and am confined to an electric wheelchair. The reason for this is simple – I suffer from Muscular Dystrophy. If you don't know what that is, go and look it up in an encyclopaedia. For those of you without an encyclopaedia, it's like Pac Man (remember him?). Basically it's a wasting away of all the body's muscles (starts in the legs and works its way upwards – Pac Man style). Of course, there's a lot more to it than that, but that will do for the time being.

Now, if it wasn't for the silicon chip I don't know where I'd be. Why? Well, it's simple. For a start, to write would take well over two hours and there would be no way for me to post it. I would be stuck at home watching TV with noone to turn the channels for me. There would be no way for me to work or earn a living.

Thanks to the silicon chip, however, it's a case of look out world, I'm here! Would you believe what have got silicon chips in? My wheelchair, for a start, has four of them to control movement, lights, indicator and power. Then there are computers. Infra red remote controls make my life so much easier.

To earn a wage (okay, so it's small compared to other people) gives you a feeling of satisfaction, instead of living off the government doing nothing, thinking 'because I'm disabled why should I go to work?'. This is not the way the majority of disabled people think. Believe me, the amount of people saying things like 'Quick wrap him up, he might be cold', or 'Does he take sugar?' when they are sitting right next to you, happens so often that it is past a joke.

Anyway, what I'm saying is that although 'cybernautics' might be a new thing for the rest of the world, for the one in four of us it's nothing new.

You haven't fallen asleep on me have you? If you have I'll have no choice but to confine you to a wheelchair for one day and tell you to go and do the shopping!
Simon Glister. Southampton.

WHICH CONSOLE?

Dear Games Machine
I moved to Australia from Hong Kong a few months ago. I owned a PC and want to get a game console, but don't know which one is the best for games.

Over in Hong Kong, there are two types of Nintendo – red and white or grey. The cartridges are very cheap at between $5-$18 and disks are even cheaper between $4-$10 and most of them are from the arcade like *Double Dragon*, *Salamander*, *Street Fighter*, *1943*. Some games from Japanese cartoons are even better than the arcade games.

The PC Engine is a new game console with the best graphics but it doesn't have many games. Do do you think I should buy it? *After Burner* and *Shinobi* are my favourite Sega games and they're out on the Sega Master System.

So which one should I buy – Nintendo with disk drive, PC Engine or Sega?
Stan Wong, Australia.

That's the sixty four million dollar question, and ultimately it's a question of personal taste. The PC Engine undoubtedly has the superior graphics but the software support for the machine is dubious at the moment. Nintendo and Sega both have their followers, we suggest you look at the games you really want to play and then see which machines they are available on.

JUST GLUT WITH STUPIDITY

Dear Games Machine
I'm just glut with all this stupid thing! What do you think you are? Nero? I'm a Portuguese user and I don't understand! Why don't you talk about MSX?

What I want to tell you it's that if this is a really computer magazine, it should talk also about MSX! If TGM talks chiefly about 16-bit computers, why don't they talk about MSX 2? You never see an MSX 2 game? Take a look at Perry Mason - the computer game, by Idealogic on the MSX 2! Sorry if I'm rude, I know the MSX 16 bit has yet to arrive in the UK, but consideration is needed! And about *Dragon Slayer* . . . it's a Walt Disney movie and the hero is not a warrior but a wizard and the dragon's lair is a cavern! Thank you for the attention.
Sergio Nuno Sousa, Portugal

Er, quite.

WHEN IS A GAME NOT A GAME?

Dear Games Machine,
That's it, that's done it, now I'm really mad! I've just received notification from a mail order firm that *Federation Of Free Traders* on the ST, a game that I ordered weeks ago, will not be available 'til the end of November.

My other experiences over the last week or so with various mail order companies are the cancellation of my order for the ST version of *Kennedy Approach* which in the adverts is out now. It's not expected for another month. Similarly I ordered and paid for the ST version of *Barbarian 2*, now at least another month away.

My suggestions to prevent the hype and to prevent similar frustrations is as follows.

1) Magazines should only allow an advert of a new game if there is an anticipated release date.
2) Reviews (not previews) should only be done when the game is about to be released.
3) Mail order companies should be prevented from advertising games that are not likely to come out for some time.

Look at *Alternative World Games*. The ST version was advertised before last Christmas. And how about the delay on *Outrun* for the ST last year. Now it's *Afterburner* and *R-Type* etc.

Just study some of the adverts around. I can only comment on ST, but I bet other machines are similar. *Kristal*, *Heroes Of The Lance*, *Mars Cops* are just a few of the culprits.

Imagine this happening in the car industry. You order a brand new 1989 model and wait, wait, and them find it's been delayed and is never going to be manufactured. It would never happen, so why should it in the software industry? Let's fight the hype and get the industry in order
. A.M.Adams, Kent.

Although there are major differences between the motor industry and the software industry, your points are valid ones. However, you must keep in mind that distributors and dealers are often as much at the mercy of the software houses and their hype as you or I. There have been some notoriously long delays in both the coding and the conversions of certain games, some for entirely legitimate reasons, others more dubious. It would be impossible to check the claims of every advertiser and therefore the moral must be that when there is any doubt about the release date of a product, check with the dealer concerned before parting with your money.

ST AND AMIGA

Dear Games Machine
I'm as sick as a parrot of all this ST vs Amiga rubbish. Surely these people don't need to think twice about the facts, which are these:
a) The ST was the only affordable advertised 16-bit machine over a year ago when most people bought them. Surely Amiga elitists don't think these people who have bought loads of software for the machine will all swap it for the Amiga?
b) Games-wise the Amiga is technically superior and your mags technical run down shows this clearly enough even for the myopic.
c) Yes, software for the ST *is* more abundant and more often of a higher quality at present. If everyone jumps on the band wagon it will remain that way.
P.s. As an Amiga owner I am definately not a rich b*****d.
M.Burley, Kent.

DRAGONS LAIR

Dear Games Machine
I am writing to you concerning the article in TGM**009** on *Dragons Lair* on laser disk using the Atari ST. Would you believe me if I told you that it could be done on a feeble 8-bit computer using a LD player – say the Pioneer LE-700 as used by you in your review. I'd better mention that the computer I am talking about is in fact a MSX computer which was sold in UK and probably still available at a discounted price.

The model is the Pioneer PX-7 which has video input and output as well as Audio L&R input and output and remote control for the LD-700 & LD1100 as well as the two sound channels all the commands needed built in. I am sure Microdeal could see a market for this system as there are a number of units in UK not to mention Japan where the bulk of them reside. All these capabilities are possible from a feeble 8-bit MSX.

By the way there is a magazine for MSX owners which your readers might be interested in. It's available from the following address: Computer Forum, PO Box 87, MT Hawthorn 6016, W.A.Australia.
Craig Hursey, Australia

APPALLED

Dear Games Machine
Re piracy: I enjoyed the feature in TGM**013** on this controversial topic. It is clear that piracy is an almost impossible problem which doesn't seem to have a definite solution.

However, it infuriates me to see pirates at work using peripherals which are blatantly designed for this job.

I quote: *'You can skip around the protection anyway,' says Robert . . . He uses Trilogic's Expert Cartridge – a common pirates' tool.*

If it is such a common tool used by pirates, why the hell isn't it taken off the market?

It's amazing the innocent stand pirates take. They come up with some fascinating excuses: a) *We shouldn't have to pay for trash*, b) *If software houses release trash they deserve all they get.*

Well, if the games are such trash, why do pirates copy them? Certainly not for themselves. Another lovely quotation from your article: *'We don't call ourselves pirates, because pirates do it for gain.'*

I see, now, you don't gain anything from copying your pal's game. It's just for the fun of it. It only means you don't have to pay £10 for it yourself. How nice.

'Distasteful'
Personally I think software buyers are downright distasteful on the whole. 80% of software buyers have copied or received a copy of a computer game, with apparently no conscience.
If I were the software houses, I

PRESS ANY KEY

wouldn't produce a game for six months and see how the buyers feel.

They complain about crap on the market – okay, so 60% of software is crap. But we have magazines which tell us which are the good, the bad and the ugly.

I spend maybe £25 every three months on one game for my Amiga and it keeps me happy for three months. I check in all the magazines before I buy and I am careful. If everyone did that, we wouldn't have feelings of being swindled.

I'm afraid that the simple fact is, despite what pirates themselves say, piracy boils down to simple human greed of wanting something for nothing.

Demetri Panayi

For a start, Trilogic's Expert Cartridge can't be 'taken off the market' just like that, any more than kitchen knives can be taken off the market because people use them in violent crime.

Trilogic argue, of course, that there are many above-board users of the Expert Cartridge – mainly programmers (the example they cite is John Twiddy of Ikari Warriors, who uses it regularly).

And that, in a sense, leads to the next answer. Pirates would probably prefer to be labelled programmers or 'crackers'; it's getting round the protection and 'training' the game (adding infinite lives etc) that gives the real thrill. Copying it and putting their code name on it is really just a way of showing that they did it first.

In fact, pirate Robert (whom you quote) recently told Barnaby Page (the author of the article) that he never plays most of his games. Nor, no doubt, do many other pirates – and remember that many cracked games never go beyond the pirate circle and never are sold.

We at TGM do think piracy is wrong, because it's breaking the law. The statement that pirates want 'something for nothing' is a simple way of explaining it as purely greed-motivated crime, but we don't believe it's true.

WHY NO TV?

Dear Games Machine,
Why, oh why, are there no television programmes dealing with computer games and hardware? Even Channel 4 doesn't have a computer show and I thought it was supposed to represent minority interests! There must be millions of computer owners as well as people who use computers for their jobs. Also just because a person doesn't own a computer doesn't mean that they aren't interested in them. Take cars for example. I am not a cars enthusiast, but I still watch *Top Gear* now and again. TGM must have some high contacts, so couldn't you do something to put me out of my misery?

Niels Campbell, Dumbartonshire.

Can any of our televisual high-ups help Mr Campbell?

NOSTALGIA

Dear Games Machine,
I was recently leafing through some old ZZAP'S dating from 1985 and the memories they brought back to me made me realise that while from time to time the technical quality of games has improved drastically, the general fun and playability of games has gone downhill.

Look at the 'excellent' games of the moment: *Carrier Command*, *Interceptor*, *Starglider 2* – all rated highly by most computer magazines but all proving to be ultimately very disappointing in my opinion. Perhaps it's because the 16-bit market is quite young and companies are relying on graphical excellence to sell a game. *Carrier Command* is slow, frustrating and often boring – once the enemy carrier is encountered it's a piece of cake to blow it out of the water.

Starglider 2 has an enormously large playing area but the surfaces are all the same and the tunnel sequences are not exactly enthralling. *Interceptor* is easy and repetetive. All of these games are graphically brilliant – but so what? I can remember playing for hours on end on my '64 back in '85, and I can remember being totally addicted to the games available then. Games like *Paradroid*, *Ballblazer* and, in my opinion the best game ever written *Mercenary*.

Until I find something of interest in the 16-bit market that really holds my interest I'm just going to have to sit back, read my old magazines and reminisce on days gone by.

Ceri Stagg, Southsea.



AMIGA AND ST

Dear Games Machine,
I would like to say that I'm sick of people going on about the Amiga and the ST.

The people who write in to you always say how much better the Amiga is to the ST, but the thing that gets me the most about these people who have 16-bit computers is that they don't know how lucky they are. Don't you think that any computer you might have is better than none at all?

I would like to say how much I enjoy your magazine. I've been collecting it since issue one and find that it's improving as the months go by.

Oh – I would like to say something about a certain A.S.Tee from Worcestershire in TGM **013**. What on earth does he need all those STs for?

Well, keep up the good work and I hope your magazine continues going strong.

Malcolm Major, South Humberside.

CHESS AND CONSOLES

Dear Games Machine
After reading your great mag for nearly one year now, I thought I might as well write to you.

I must give you some very BIG thanx for your mega-supersonical-ultrabrilliant-astonishing MIDI supplement in TGM**012**. No, I mean it – it's brilliant in its simplicity. Finally someone had the idea of putting everything about MIDI together, not just for the beginner, but also for the more advanced musician.

And just in time – I was looking for a reasonably-priced MIDI keyboard (after fiddling with my little Casio), and after reading your supplement I finally *could* make up my mind. By the way, I've bought the Yamaha PSS 480 – it's great stuff for little money!

Also, I will be looking forward to more information about that new games console. Remember the PC Engine? Only one month ago everyone was convinced that this was the icing cake, but it seems there aren't that many people who can buy it – so please don't rave too hard. It might turn out to be less 'super.' than you think, although I hope it will be great. And when they manage to drop the prices of the software, I might even want to buy one myself.

And now for a question about the great-looking *Battle Chess* for the Amiga – could you tell me who it's aimed at? As stated, it looks and sounds good, but after a few games one probably will get very tired with the very long pauses because some data must be loaded.

What do you end up with after this? A chess game real chess fanatics won't buy – it really isn't strong enough. *Psion Chess* butchered *Battle Chess* in ten test games (*Psion* on my ST, *Battle Chess* on my friend's Amiga).

And arcadeholics who can't play chess will ask themselves why they bought it once the novelty has worn out.

Rob Negerman
Karel Doormanstraat 3
7204 JH Zutphen
Holland

New console? We assume you're talking about the Konix Slipstream, and there's more news on that in this month's TGM Report – including the good tidings that software will cost as little as £15.

Battle Chess is the computer equivalent of a coffee-table book – something which our dictionary defines as 'a book designed to be looked at rather than read'. Replace 'read' with 'played', and you probably get the message.

SEXISM (AGAIN?)

Dear Games Machine,
I object to being called a pervert by A.Miga and L.Robert (TGM**012**). I am male and am not writing from Greenham Common.

Women should not be portrayed as sex objects. Women are just the same as men, except for differences in certain body parts. I would object to being seen as just a sex object, but I'm lucky that I'm not. If anyone wants to gloat over female bodies they should buy *Playboy*, not TGM.

Now to change the subject! This Atari ST/Amiga war is pointless. Both are good computers and neither of them are used to their full potential. I have an ST but I think the Amiga is better in many ways, and vice versa.

The price of 16-bit games is lunacy. Playability and lastability are not taken into account when 16-bit games are designed. In many ways I wish my trusty old '64 worked! The games were better and didn't cost 20 quid.

Mel Croucher is wrong in recommending graphic equalisers for personal stereos. They are just gimmicks that have a detrimental effect on sound quality. It may be fun to plat about with sliders, but hi-fi is about playing music exactly as it was recorded. Many hi-fi experts do not even think that treble and bass controls should be fitted on amplifiers.

Your magazine is the most interesting and sensible one and I think it's great! Keep up the good work.

Mark Ivens, London NW8.

MSX AGAIN

Dear Games Machine
Firstly, my I congratulate you on an excellent magazine. It is by far the best multi user mag around.

Now to the point of this letter - the MSX. This computer is truly wonderful and I believe that you cannot put it down unless you have played *real* software like *Nemesis 2* or *F1 Spirit*. You know because you have played them, I know because I have played them, and if you hook up your MSX to a stereo you are in for a real treat!

It has to be said that no really great software support has been given but it could all change if people started to buy the machine. You not only have the choice of MSX but also of MSX 2. What more could you ask for?

But now for the bad news. Phillips, producers of the MSX 2 see the 16-bit micro as the future, so from December they will stop producing MSX 2. This was heart breaking, but now Phillips are working on a board for their PC range that turns it into a 16-bit MSX! So now you can play all those brilliant games on the PC, 'tis truly wonderful!

I hope now that people will look at these machines with as much envy as the ST and Amiga. They deserve it.

Stephen Charnock, Kidderminster.

Last month it was the ST/Amiga war, this month MSX gets all the praise. If you've got something you want to get off your chest, be it praise or condemnation, don't forget to drop TGM a line – £40 worth of software is up for grabs for the best letter of the month. 8-bit, 16-bit *and* consoles, Readerpage is *your* forum. Write to READERPAGE, TGM, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

CRUCIAL COMPILATION



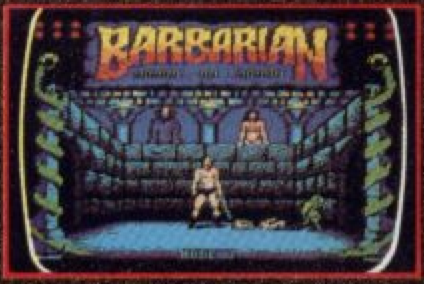
LAST NINJA
REPLACES
CRAZY CARS ON
THE COMMODORE

THE IN CROWD

ocean



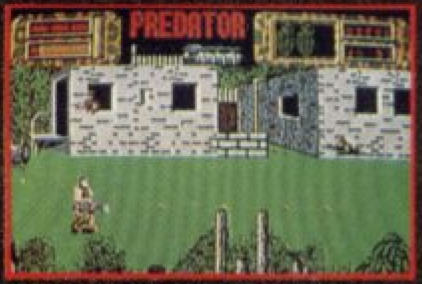
GRYZOR Featuring all the game-play of the arcade original, Gryzor takes you into a thrilling alien world of force fields, fanatical guerillas and strange enemy defence systems – but you have the fire-power and maybe, with a 'little' skill, grit and split second timing, you can infiltrate the aliens' headquarters. Play Gryzor once and you'll be hooked!
© 1987 Konami



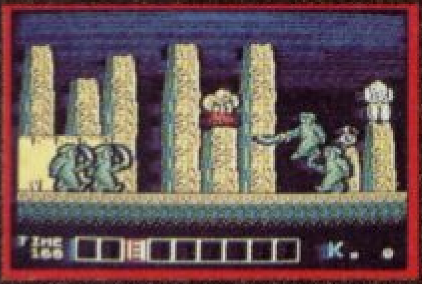
BARBARIAN THE STORY SO FAR... The evil sorcerer Drax has agreed that if a champion can be found who is able to defeat his demonic guardians, the Princess Mariana will be released. From the wastelands comes an unknown barbarian, a mighty warrior, wielding his broadsword with deadly skill. Can he vanquish the forces of Darkness? ONLY YOU CAN SAY...
© Palace Software Ltd



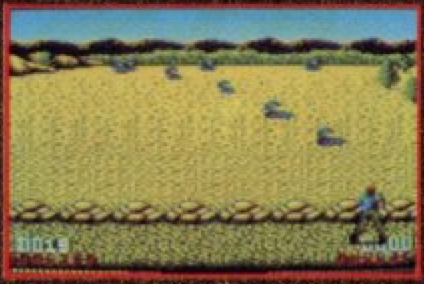
CRAZY CARS You are racing in the world's craziest race: "The American Cross Country Prestige Cars Race". If you are able to complete the race before the time runs out, you will get a faster car. You start with a Mercedes 560 SEC, and only the world's best drivers may drive a Ferrari GTO.
PREPARE TO START, READY? GO!!!
© Titus Software Ltd.
LAST NINJA replaces C.CARS on C64



PREDATOR You've heard about Predator, the Schwarzenegger movie – now you can play the leading role. Take a crack commando unit into the South American jungle to rescue a bunch of trapped diplomats. Should be easy enough...and so it would be, if it weren't for the mysterious alien who keeps on taking out your men.
© 1987 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. All rights reserved.



KARNOV Join Karnov, the fire-breathing Russian stongman, on his hazardous quest to defeat the evil dragon Ryu and find the Lost Treasure of Babylon. Karnov is a vast 4-way scrolling game that combines both strategy and fast action in nine challenging levels of gameplay. It is recognised by arcade addicts everywhere as one of the best games of its kind. Karnov also has something special in the way of characters – have you ever been killed by a skeleton on an Ostrich?
© Electric Dreams Software Ltd.



COMBAT SCHOOL Konami's arcade hit now for your home micro and already a No. 1 hit. Seven gruelling events featuring the Assault Course, Firing Range, Arm Wrestling and Combat with the instructor himself! Combat school throws down the challenge to the toughest of thoroughbred gamesters.
© 1987 Konami



TARGET RENEGADE Every move you make, every step you take, they're watching you. Fight your way through the precinct – the back alleys, the car parks, fight your way through the villainous community, the skin-heads, the Beastie Boys, the bouncers. This is just the tip of the iceberg on you chilling quest to confront "MR. BIG".



PLATOON Lead your Platoon deep into enemy territory, you can almost feel the humidity, sense the threatening dangers as you encounter the enemy and his many booby traps. Having found the underground maze of tunnels, enter at your peril! Enemy soldiers lunge at you from the murky waters within, but this is the only way you can find vital information. If you come out of this alive, you'll be just one of the few!
© 1986 Hemdale Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

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the charts



Like, wow, merry, y'know: what does technophile and semihippy programmer Jeff Minter want for Christmas?

READERS' CHARTS

Become rich and famous! Well, one out of two ain't bad – we welcome *your* charts on any topic, and though we don't pay for them, you get your name emblazoned in fine ink on every copy of the magazine.

Truly, a priceless heirloom of the typesetter's and designer's art to cherish, so send 'em in to **Charts, TGM, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*.**

PRETENTIOUS SOFTWARE NAMES

- **Walking Circles**
- Digital Integration
- **Digital Inspiration**
- Thalamus
- **Electric Dreams**
- Magnetic Scrolls
- **Sentient Software**
- Delta 4

DEAR SANTA...

What they want for Christmas

● **The Amiga** A MIDI port, 'cos then I'd *really* be better than the machine next door!

● **Mediagenic (previously Activision)** The good old days.

● **Alan Sugar** People to stop calling me a 'former barrow boy'. I still *am* one at heart.

● **The ST** Graphics and sound custom chips, 'cos then I'd *really* be better than the machine next door!

● **Code Masters** The respect we deserve. Also, people to stop making jokes about little Darlings.

● **Archimedes owners** Software.

● **Potential Atari CD-ROM player owners** Hardware.

● **8-bit fogies** More games like *Jet Set Willy*, this 16-bit business is all very well but . . .

● **Jeff Minter, Llamasoft** Yeah, right, an Atari Abaq Transputer workstation, a laser video projector, limitless supplies of Inca-Cola, all of Floyd on CD, herds of llamas to molest and I'd like Peru.

● **The Oric 1** A disk drive, another 496K of RAM, and a processor twice the size and speed, 'cos then I'd *really* be better than the machine next door! Oh, and some software. And some users.

● **Robin Hogg, TGM** Corinne Russell and an F-19 jet for extra thrust power.

OUR FAVOURITE PHRASES

● 'Unfortunately this disk I'm showing you doesn't have that feature, but it'll be brilliant in the final version.'

● **'I can't tell you offhand what the memory requirement is, but I'm sure it will work on your machine, now if you'd just sign here . . .'**

● 'The PC Engine is definitely 8-bit'

● **'The PC Engine is definitely 16-bit'**

● 'We'll be sending you the Parsec Pixel Plus next week'

● **'Can we have a double-page spread for Budget Rip-off Simulator please?'**

● 'You're from TGM Report? Oh, um, I'm afraid [insert name of controversial company boss] is away all week.'

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST

1 **IBM** PCs (30)
2 **Amstrad** PCs, CPC, PCW range, Spectrums (197)
3 **Hewlett-Packard** printers (218)
4 **Virgin Group** Virgin, Mastertronic, Melbourne House labels (282)
5 **Motorola** chips for Amiga, ST and Apple Mac (304)
6 **Toshiba** PCs (334)
7 **Wang** PCs (396)
8 **NEC** portables (601)
9 **Commodore Business Machines** C64, Amiga (726)
10 **Apricot Computers** PCs (742)

Ocean, eat your heart out – a recent list of Britain's top thousand companies showed that the money's still in hardware. And here we reveal the top ten firms in microcomputing.

For each company we've shown what micro products they make, and (in brackets) where they rank in the list of *all* companies. (For trivia addicts, British Petroleum takes first place.)

PS: We missed out British Telecom, the country's number four firm, because Telecomsoft is such a tiny part of their activities.

SOURCE: The *Business* 1000, *Business* magazine

WHO'S ■ SUING ■ WHOM

● **Code Masters** are suing fellow budget house Alternative Software . . . because the packaging of Alternative's *Formula Grand Prix* allegedly plagiarises the packaging of Code Masters's 200,000-seller *Grand Prix Simulator*.

Code Masters want the court to prevent *Formula Grand Prix* from being distributed, and damages.

Formula Grand Prix itself is a rerelease of *Formula One* from CRL, who can be found elsewhere in the litigation chart . . .

● **CRL** are suing Electronic Arts . . . for allegedly not paying them £204,000 in royalties.

● **Apple Computer** are suing Microsoft . . . for allegedly unauthorised use of their WIMP environment in *Windows* version 2.03. They want Microsoft to stop, and unspecified damages.

(A bitchy aside: The original judge on this San Francisco case, Robert Aguiler, was replaced by William W Schwarzer – apparently after Apple complained that Aguiler's son worked for Hewlett-Packard, which is also involved.

The new judge had already been assigned by late October – he contacted Apple regarding the case on October 25 – but 'news' items on this stunning development did not appear in certain quarters of the British computer press till late November. First news, then non-news . . . every week.)

Who's Suing Whom details were correct at press time.

SOFTWARE RISING

'If today is your birthday, your hard disk will crash.' That's the familiar image of **astrology** – pseudomystical columns wrapping up **fish**.

But as TGM discovered, there's more to stargazing than meets the eye. And now you can do it on your computer with *PCA*. Jon Rose puts the **future** in your hands.

Astrology will never seem the same again – now the heaven-gazer's cluttered cellar of astrolabe, sextant, compass and endless charts has been replaced by a micro. The principles haven't changed, but astrological software effectively takes the legwork out of calculation.

Planets move in mathematically predetermined cycles, so it is possible to quickly chart the position of any given planet with pinpoint accuracy, thousands of years into the past and into the future. And, of course, computers don't make mistakes.

Some programs also provide interpretation; not only will they process all the natal data to generate the birth chart, but they'll tell you what it means as well.

And though astrology is a vast subject, at its mathematical roots it is concerned with three basic variables: signs, planets and houses.

Inside the zodiac

The 12 houses of the equal house system – best known as the signs of the zodiac – represent spheres of activity in life. The second house, for instance is linked with money, the sixth with health, the tenth with career, and so on.

The sign of each house shows the *way* in which these activities will occur, while the planets show where and when.

The sign which is coming over the horizon at the moment of a person's birth is 'rising', and constitutes the position of the division of the first house. This corresponds to the temperament and outward nature of the person, or native. Any planet close to the rising sign is also significant to the astrologer.

Newspaper astrology columns concern themselves only with sun signs – Cancer, Scorpio etc. Each of these covers several weeks and therefore applies to many people, unlike the birth chart, which is as unique as a fingerprint (even twins are born minutes apart).

The position of the sun in the birth chart represents the ego, or conscious mind. The sign which it is found in, and the rising sign, provide two important personality traits. The moon is seen to signify the unconscious or intuitive mind, while Mercury represents reasoning and intellectual ability.

Once the basic chart has been constructed, and the planets placed in the various houses, the next thing the astrologer turns to is the aspects. These are the relationships between the planets depending upon their distance apart in the chart.

The astrologer will generally ignore variations of 8° either way – for example, 172° and 188° would both be treated as 180°. This margin, which can be changed, is known as the applying orb.

Two planets 180° apart are said to be in opposition. If they're close together within the applying orb, they are said to be in conjunction. The other main configurations to be considered are sextiles (60°), squares (90°) and trines (120°).

But if all this geometry puts you off, that's where The Electric Ephemeris's *PCA* software comes in.

Onscreen astrology

After booting up *PCA*, the user must input essential details for the birth chart: name, date of birth, time of birth, zone, town of birth (longitude and latitude), harmonic, orb and printer. (Usually, the default values will be used for the numeric variables.)

The program comes with a gazetteer covering 1,000 major towns and cities, for which it will automatically produce the longitude and latitude. This is a very useful facility because, when in doubt, you can always input a town near to the place of birth. There is of course a facility for saving your own map references to the gazetteer file.

ZONE is a variable which can be ignored if you have already converted birth time to Greenwich Mean Time. In this case, the zone would be 0, the default. British Summer Time is zone 1 and so forth. If the place of birth is west of Greenwich, the zone will be a minus number.

HARMONIC refers to a way of mathematically advancing the birth data for a given year. But harmonics are a relatively recent innovation, not essential, and so this number can be left at the default, 1.

ORB allows the user to specific how wide or narrow he wants the aspects to apply. By default this remains at 8°.

When this data has been input, the user can choose whether to use a printer or not. The complete birth data can then be saved to the data file for later use.

And what to do next is up to the user.

LIFE ■ THE UNIVERSE ■ AND EVERYTHING

The principles of astrology are based on a very ancient world view: man is a microcosm of the universe, and all events are subtly linked in space and time.

But in practice few astrologers have a coherent theory for how their subject works – they simply argue that the universe behaves as if astrology *does* work.

Many people who look at astrology literally, such as astronomer Patrick Moore, see an absurd, meaningless system. But that's because they take it literally. This is obviously nonsense, because the position of a planet in a constellation is relative to the vantage point of the observer – no planet can actually be *in* a sign, it merely *appears* to be from our viewpoint on earth.

Astrology is, in fact, a symbolic system which simply uses the convenient framework of the night sky.

How it works

By knowing the precise time and place of someone's birth you can, cross-referencing with an astronomical ephemeris and an atlas, plot the position of the planets within the zodiac at the moment of birth. The resulting hard copy is called a natal chart, and purports to show the personality and life potential of the native.

Further calculations can help the astrologer see what future forces will affect the native, and when. More sophisticated techniques can be used to analyse the state of nations, or to look at specific questions.

But is it science?

The calculative side of astrology is entirely scientific, because anyone with an ephemeris and an atlas can produce exactly the same chart. However, this is only half the story.

The interpretation of the chart is eminently unscientific because no two people will provide exactly the same conclusions, though astrologers will argue that there should be similarities between them.

Once he has constructed a natal chart, the astrologer is overloaded with information and it's up to him how he puts it all together. This is the process of synthesis – making up a coherent whole from the data.

PCA ■ SPECIFICATION

The basic *PCA* program covers all house systems, transits, solar and lunar returns, progressions, tertiaries, midpoints, harmonics, and synastry with composite and relationship charts, and gives full printer support and a clock facility for astrology 'of the moment'. You can also construct your own interpretive text.

It is available on PC, Amstrad PCW and CPC6128 at £80, and on all Spectrums at £60 (only 500 entries per file and no gazetteer or text facility).

For an extra £33 you can have the more advanced program, which includes an interpretation manual and example disk files.

There's also *PCM*, a stand-alone program for natal charting only, with ready-made interpretive text. This will construct the chart and provide printout. *PCM* is available on the PC, Amstrad PCW and CPC6128, retailing at £180.

The Electric Ephemeris, *214 Finchley Road, Hampstead, London NW3 6DH* ☎ (01) 435-4619.

TO ■ READ

Recommended words of wisdom: *The Astrologer's Handbook* (1973) by Francis Sakoian and Louis S Acker, Penguin Books, £5.95 paperback.

ALSO ■ AVAILABLE

Software house **Astrocalc** offer a range of software packages which you can mix and match, ranging from £12.50 for a self-teach program to several hundred pounds. Most popular formats, including C64/128, Amstrad CPC, all Spectrums and MSX, are covered.

Astrocalc, *67 Peascroft Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 8ER* ☎ (0442) 51809.

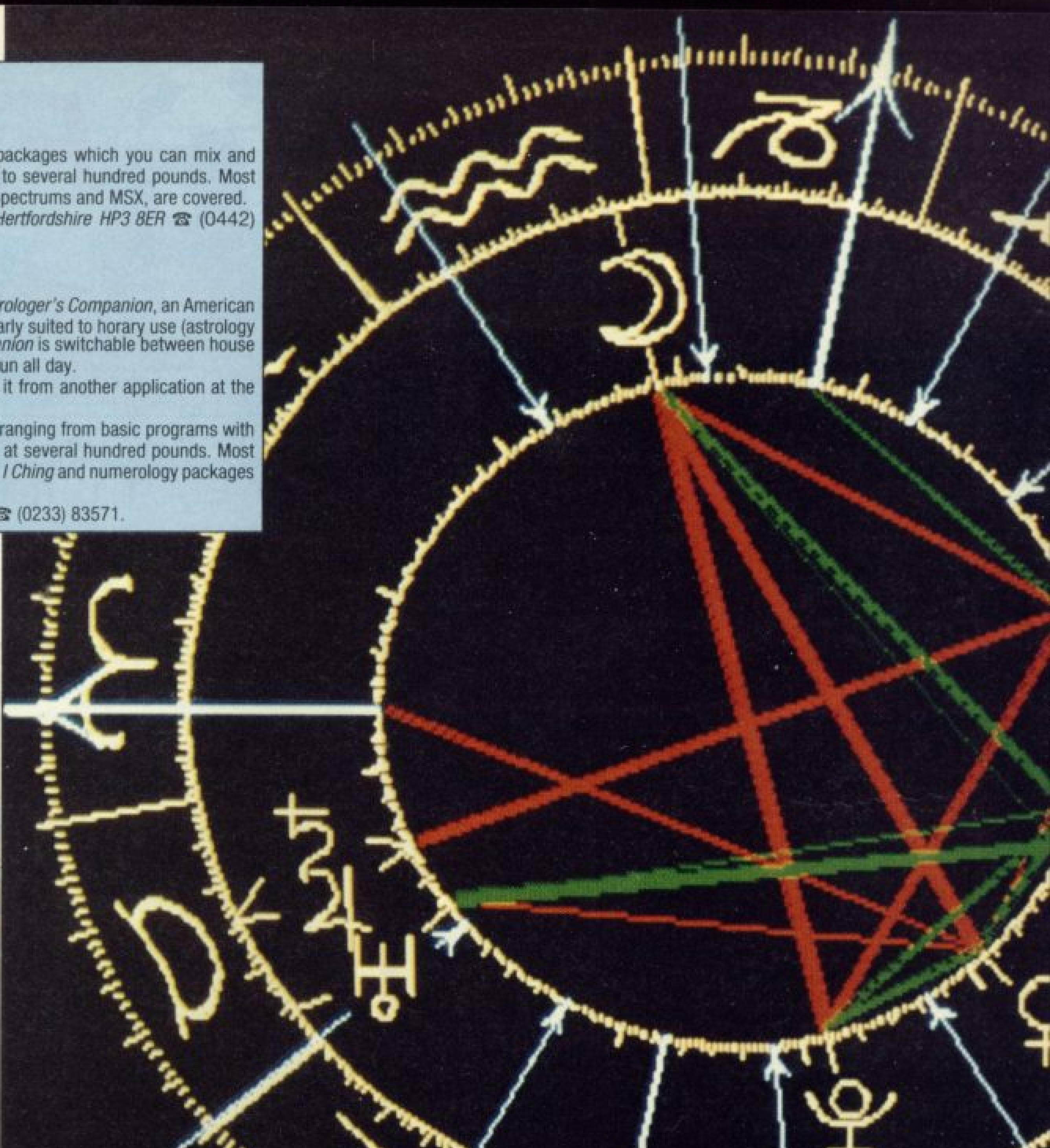
PC prediction

PC users seeking a cheaper alternative could try *The Astrologer's Companion*, an American import available for £49.95 from **MGA Softcat**. Particularly suited to horary use (astrology of time or predictive astrology), *The Astrologer's Companion* is switchable between house systems, times and dates, and the clock can be left to run all day.

The program is RAM-resident, so you can switch to it from another application at the press of a key (but it takes 95K).

MGA Softcat also import other astrological software, ranging from basic programs with no printout facilities to complete interpretive packages at several hundred pounds. Most are available on PC and C64 (two drives recommended). *I Ching* and numerology packages are also available.

MGA Softcat, *Pear Tree, Appledore, Kent TN26 2AR* ☎ (0233) 83571.



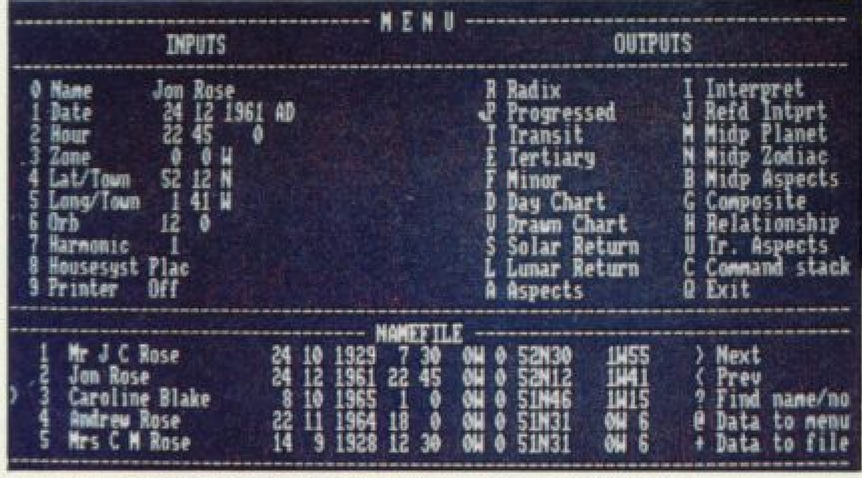
Data on demand

If you choose the RADIX option, *PCA* calculates all the data for the birth chart including ascendant, midheaven, house positions and planetary positions within them. Returning to the menu and selecting ASPECTS brings up a list of all the aspects within the predefined orb.

DRAW CHART produces a full chart-wheel with signs, planets and houses onscreen, complete with aspect lines. In the PC's EGA graphics mode, this can be quite spectacular. The chart can of course be printed out in pretty well any shape or size, or sent to a plotter.

By using the COMMAND STRING function it is possible to build up very comprehensive and elaborate functions. You can, for instance, enter the data for ten charts and program *PCA* to print out each in turn.

And one of the most powerful features of *PCA* allows the user to construct his own interpretive text. This sidesteps the problem that most cookbook-type astrology programs present when they do the interpretation for you.



Menu screen of PCA – with all these options, the sky's the limit!



The secret's out: TGM Editor Jon Rose's natal chart, as shown by PCA on a CPC screen

Advanced functions

Once the birth data have been entered, more advanced functions can be performed, including TRANSIT. Planets are moving relative to each other all the time, and when they come into alignment with planets in the natal chart they are said to be in transit. The moon, for instance, travels round the zodiac every 24 hours so it is continuously creating transiting aspects with natal planets.

Transiting planets activate the latent tendencies in the birth chart at specific times – though the faster-moving planets are generally disregarded, because their effect is supposedly too slight to be of any significance.

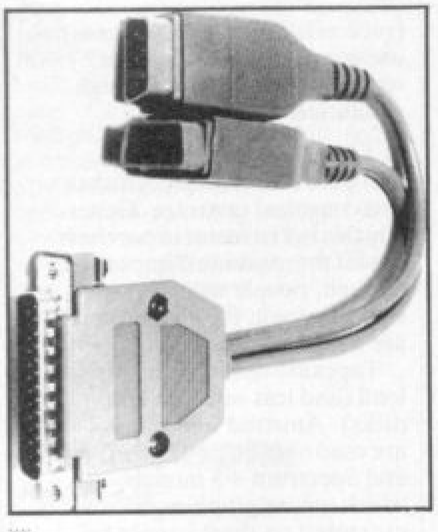
Elsewhere in *PCA*, interesting effects can be seen by creating the composite charts of two individuals. To do this it is first necessary to generate the birth data for the first chart and then to examine the data for the second using the TRANSIT option.

Select COMPOSITE, and the two are merged so they can be dealt with as an individual chart.

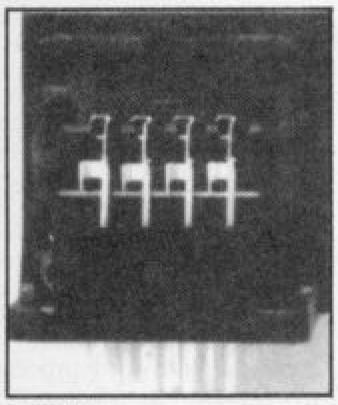
That's flexibility

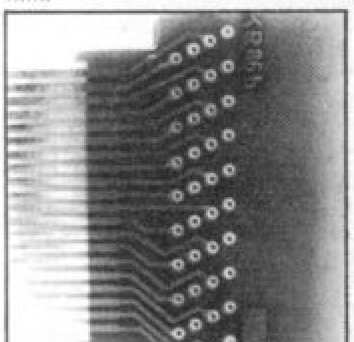
As you might expect from software of this price and complexity, *PCA* is extremely flexible. Most options can be redefined, including the display colour (in EGA mode), the size of printout, the degree of flattening, and the number of lines on the page.

PCA is a very sophisticated package and the chances are you won't want or need anything more advanced than this. More than anything else, this a fascinating program to work with and, coupled with a little information on the subject, it will be difficult to resist trying just one more 'what if' scenario.



BACK BYTES





CONTENTS

GUIDE TO COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Most people know what they want in a computer, but it's not always easy to find out the exact details of who offers what – particularly when new hardware is surrounded by even more hype and technojargon than the latest games.

You may want to spend the rest of your life in joyous harmony with an Acorn Archimedes, but do you know what its screen resolution really is, or how many notes it can play?

You may want to take part in the perennial ST vs Amiga argument, but where do you find the facts?

Here – and armed with this information you can bravely waltz into your local dealer and say 'I know what I want so give it to me'. It's also guaranteed to break the ice at parties.

For each machine we've listed:

● *PRICE* (usually the recommended retail price), *including* VAT – unlike some reports. Computers are being sold with 'bundles' (software, joystick etc) more and more often, and prices change frequently. Sometimes particular high-street shops offer their own bundles, so shop around and watch TGM for advance reports.

● *MEMORY* – don't be fooled by demos or publicity which show an apparently cheap machine running fantastically sophisticated software. Many computers – the ST, for instance – come in different versions with different memories, and because of chip prices, memory is currently very expensive. This is particularly important in packages using digitised graphics or sampled music.

Memory is measured in bytes, kilobytes (abbreviation K; 1K=1,024 bytes), or megabytes (abbreviation Mb; 1Mb=1,048,576 bytes).

A few expensive models have hard disks – literally that, hard disks built into the computer. They're useful for storing frequently-used applications software, because you can load from them much quicker than from a disk or tape drive ('external drive'). But for gamers, they're really a waste of money.

● *PROCESSOR*. The important aspects of a processor are a) word length and b) speed. A high word length and high speed mean complex graphics can move very quickly (and number-crunching in applications like databases is speeded up too).

Word length is usually 8, 16 or 32 bits – a 16-bit machine can process twice as much information at one go as an 8-bit machine. Speed is measured in megahertz (MHz), which means 'million words processed per second'.

So a machine like the Sinclair Professional PC, which has a 16-bit processor running at 8Mhz, munches 8 million words, each 16 bits long, every second.

Most personal computers have one processor to make the software do its stuff; some, like the Amiga, also have 'dedicated' processors to handle graphics and sound, which speeds them up.

● *RESOLUTION*, or the number of pixels on the screen. High resolutions mean more detailed, realistic graphics.

Resolution is measured with two numbers: number of pixel rows across the screen x number of pixel rows down the screen.

However, high resolutions can generally use fewer colours together on the same screen, because they take more memory. Under this heading we've noted how many colours are available onscreen at any one time.

● *COLOUR PALETTE* – the total number of colours available on the computer (though not at the same time!).

● *SOUND*. The important factors here are channels (the number of different pitches that can be played at a time) and pitch range (measured in octaves – an octave is the distance from, say, one C to the next on the piano).

More channels give a richer, less tinny sound.

● *VIDEO*. Most games computers can be connected to the TV or to a monitor, via a lead which plugs into a port.

Today, most monitor output is the high-quality RGB standard. But some older machines (such as BBC and MSX micros) use composite video output, which doesn't allow such high resolution.

● *SOFTWARE FORMAT*. Software comes on tape, disk or (for consoles) cartridge. Generally this isn't a factor in purchasing – if the machine is important enough, people will produce software for it. However, there are a few considerations . . .

Tapes are notoriously slow to load (and less reliable than disks). Amstrad 3-inch disks are used *only* on its CPC, PCW and Spectrum +3 models, which means graphics, words etc stored on them cannot be used in another machine without communications software and hardware.

And if you buy a PC-compatible, try to go for one with a 3.5-inch disk drive – 5.25-inch disks are fast becoming unpopular, and the software supply in that format may dry up.

Also, if you're doing more than playing games, make sure the machine can format large-memory disks (all blank disks must be formatted before use). It could be frustrating to write a 450K masterpiece if all you've got is an Atari 520 STFM – yes, the memory can handle it, but disks formatted by this model can only take 360K of data.

Blank disks usually cost around £3.

● *PORTS*. Joysticks, printers, modems, mice, MIDI music equipment, extra disk drives etc all plug into special ports. Make sure the model you choose has all the ports you need – and where salesmen are concerned, never take 'probably' for an answer.

● *SOFTWARE*. It's obvious but . . . that incredibly fast, cheap new wonder is useless unless there are some games to run on it!

32-BIT

ACORN ARCHIMEDES

PRICE Cheaper models range from £801.60 for the Archimedes 305 – which includes the keyboard, mouse and one external disk drive – to £1,280 for the Archimedes 310M which also has a colour monitor and PC emulator (so it can run PC software).
MEMORY 305 models 512K, 310 models 1Mb.
PROCESSOR 32-bit Acorn ARM, 4MHz. RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computing) technology increases processor speed but its real value is still debated.
RESOLUTION 320x256 (up to 256 colours on screen), 640x256 (up to 16 colours on screen) and 640x512 (up to 16 colours on screen but needs a multisync monitor). Great potential for graphics.
COLOUR PALETTE 4,096 colours and shades.
SOUND 16 channels (8 left and 8 right). 6-octave range. One built-in speaker but stereo output is available. Excellent sound chip rivals many low-cost synthesizers.
VIDEO Composite video and RGB outputs. No TV output.
SOFTWARE FORMAT 3.5-inch disks. Formats to 800K.
PORTS 9-pin mouse socket. 3.5mm stereo jack. RS-423 serial. Centronics-compatible parallel. I/O interface. IEC 320 video outlet. 64-way DIN. 41612 expansion port. But for MIDI a £79.35 expansion card is necessary.
SOFTWARE Despite gloomy talk, there are over 200 releases for the Archimedes – but only 13 games at last count! These include *Terramex* and the famous *Zarch*, both at £19.95 (some £14.95 titles available too). *Terramex* requires a 310 model, but most run on the 305. There are arcade and adventure construction kits, some impressive graphics software and essentially one music package (*EMR Arpeggio Music System*, £29.95).

16-BIT

ATARI ST

PRICE 520 STFM £299.99, 1040 STF £599.99. Both have one built-in external disk drive. Often available with a lot of 'free' software. Also Mega ST2 (£1,034.99 with mono monitor) and Mega ST4 (£1,379.99 with mono monitor).
MEMORY 520 model 512K, 1040 model 1Mb, Mega ST2 2Mb, Mega ST4 4Mb.
PROCESSOR 16-bit Motorola 68000, 8 MHz.
RESOLUTION 640x400 in monochrome display, 640x200 in 4-colour display and 320x200 with 16 colours onscreen.
COLOUR PALETTE 512 colours and shades.
SOUND 3-channel 8-octave through TV or monitor.
VIDEO RGB. TV port on 520 model, and expected for future 1040 models.
SOFTWARE FORMAT 3.5-inch

disks. 520 model formats to 360K, 1040 model to 720K.
PORTS 5-pin MIDI in and out. RGB. Serial modem. Two mouse/joystick ports. Cartridge. Second disk drive. Hard disk. TV port (only on 520 model at present).
SOFTWARE Support for the ST has been rapidly growing during 1988. Most new 8-bit releases are now converted to the ST. Though the sound chip is poor compared with the C64 and the Amiga, the ST now dominates music software because of the built-in MIDI ports.

COMMODORE AMIGA

PRICE The Amiga A500 including one built-in external disk drive, 'free software' and a TV modulator is £399.99. Without software and modulator, they can be found cheaper if you shop around. The Amiga A1000 is only available second-hand. The Amiga A2000 starts at £1,489.25 including mouse. Packages including the A2000, a monitor and a hard disk are also available.
MEMORY A500 model 512K, A1000 model 256K, A2000 model 1Mb.
PROCESSOR 16-bit Motorola 68000, 7.14 MHz. The processor runs slightly slower than the ST's but specialist graphics, video and sound chips effectively make the Amiga faster than the ST for games.
RESOLUTION Several modes from 320x200 (32 colours onscreen) to 640x400 (16 colours onscreen). Some art packages offer an additional Hold And Modify (HAM) mode which allows all 4,096 colours on screen.
COLOUR PALETTE 4,096 colours and shades.
SOUND 4-channel, 9-octave range. Stereo output through monitor, TV or hi-fi system. Built-in synthesizer 'speaks' typed-in text.
VIDEO No built in TV port but a modulator is available. RGB output to monitor.
SOFTWARE FORMAT 3.5-inch disks. Formats to 880K.
PORTS Audio left and right, two joystick/mouse, RS-232 serial, Centronics parallel, RGB, additional disk drive, monochrome video, expansion bus. No built-in MIDI port – a serious problem for musicians.
SOFTWARE More is coming out, but on the games front the Amiga is still behind the ST and 8-bit computers. Over 1,000 business and applications programs are available.

PC-COMPATIBLES

NOTE The original PC was produced by IBM in 1982. But though IBM are still the largest single PC producer, selling about 28% of all PCs, dozens of others produce 'compatibles' which run the same software and are often seen as better value.
PRICE Prices start from £343.85 (Sinclair Professional PC *without* monitor) and rise . . . as high as £9,000 (Compaq DeskPro 386).
Affordable models include Commodore PC1 (effectively the cheapest – £369.99 with mono monitor), Olivetti Prodest PC1 (£399 with mono monitor), and Amstrad PC1512 (£458.85 with mono monitor).
PCs are usually sold with monitors.
MEMORY From 256K upwards; at least 512K is recommended.
PROCESSOR PC-compatibles are usually described as 16-bit, but in fact there are 8-bit and 32-bit models as well. Early PCs used the 8-bit Intel 8088; most now use the 16-bit Intel 8086; and the expensive new generation uses the 16-bit Intel 80286 or 32-bit 80386.
Speed on cheap machines ranges from 4.77 MHz (eg Commodore PC1) to 8MHz (eg Amstrad PC1640).
RESOLUTION Originally designed as a business machine, the PC had very basic graphics. But there are now three common PC colour graphics standards.
Important: Software written for one standard will only run properly on a machine conforming to that standard!
The standards are:
- CGA (Colour Graphics Adapter) at 320x200 (4 colours) or 640x200 (mono);
- EGA (Enhanced Graphics Adapter) at 640x200 ('200-line mode', 16 colours) or 320x350 ('350-line mode', also 16 colours) or 640x350 (mono);
- VGA (Video Graphics Array) at 640x480 (16 colours). But this is rare, and doesn't work with ordinary RGB monitors.

Some PC-compatibles have built-in CGA, EGA or VGA – check which – and add-on graphics boards (or 'display adapters') are now available from about £100.
There are also numerous obscure graphics standards including Hercules and MDA – both mono only.
COLOUR PALETTE EGA 64 colours and shades, CGA 16.
SOUND One channel, but the speed of the processor allows pseudo-three-channel sound to be produced. Not designed as a music machine.
VIDEO No TV port. Output usually via RGB.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Older models mainly have one or two external drives for 5.25-inch disks, but 3.5-inch disks and drives are taking over. All drives format disks to 360K; some do more.
PORTS Vary from model to model. Most have expansion, RS-232 serial and Centronics parallel ports.
SOFTWARE Huge range of utilities – word processors etc (because over 24 million PC users worldwide). Also more games than you might expect, largely because of the many PC game-players in America. However, poor display and sound are problems and PC-compatibles are not recommended if you're only into games, graphics or music. If buying a PC for utilities, check which version of MS-DOS or PC-DOS operating system is supplied – a primitive version older than MS-DOS 3.2 or PC-DOS 2.X may cause problems.



8-BIT

AMSTRAD CPC

PRICE The CPC464 (built-in tape deck) is £199 with green-screen monitor or £299 with colour monitor. CPC664 models are no longer produced. The CPC6128 (one built-in external disk drive) is £299 with green-screen monitor or £399 with colour monitor.
MEMORY CPC464/CPC664 64K, CPC6128 128K.
PROCESSOR 8-bit Zilog Z80, 4 MHz.
RESOLUTION 160x200 (up to 16 colours onscreen), 320x200 (4 colours) or 640x200 (mono).
COLOUR PALETTE 27 colours and shades.
SOUND 3-channel 8-octave through built-in speaker, but stereo output is available. Sound quality is reminiscent of early arcade machines. No MIDI ports.
VIDEO Monitor supplied with all models. RGB sync output.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Tape or 3-inch disk. Disk drives format to 180K on each side.
PORTS CPC464 has Centronics parallel, 6-pin DIN RGB with sync luminance, 3.5mm stereo socket, joystick, PCB extension port for disk drive and RS-232 serial interfaces. CPC664/6128 have Centronics parallel, 6-pin DIN RGB with sync luminance, 3.5mm stereo socket, joystick, cassette port, PCB extension port and second disk drive port.
SOFTWARE Most Spectrum and C64 games are converted to the CPC but they tend to run slightly slower. Also a good selection of word processing, graphics and music packages.

COMMODORE C64/C128

PRICE C64 is £149.99 including dedicated Commodore cassette deck and ten games. C128D including disk drive £399.99.
MEMORY C64 64K, C128/C128D 128K.
PROCESSOR C64 8-bit 6510 2MHz, C128/C128D 8-bit 6502 plus 8-bit Zilog Z80, 4MHz.
RESOLUTION C64 320x200 (8 colours onscreen, but attribute system limits the number of colours that can be placed adjacent to each other). C128/C128D in 128K mode has a resolution of 640x200.
COLOUR PALETTE 16 colours and shades.
SOUND 3-channel 8-octave sound chip which outputs through the monitor/TV. The 6581 SID chip (Sound Interface Device) is one of the most sophisticated sound chips on a 8-bit computer.
VIDEO TV ports on all models. C64 has a composite video port, C128/C128D both have RGB ports for an 80-column display.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Tape or 5.25-inch disk (C128D only). Two external 5.25-inch drives are available at extra cost from Commodore – the C1541 (formats to 140K) and the C1571 (formats to 340K). Blank disks very cheap but easily damaged.
PORTS RGB (C128/C128D), composite video (C64), two joystick ports, cassette, TV, expansion port, serial (nonstandard), user port.
SOFTWARE The Commodore 64 is

PRESS ANY KEY



an old computer with years' worth of games and utilities, many imported from America. Many users, so new software likely to flow for some years yet. Z80 chip on C128/C128D allows it to run software written for CP/M operating systems (as found on Amstrad 'Joyce' PCW8256, PCW9512, and CPC6128, and Spectrum +3).

SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM

NOTE The Spectrum, now manufactured by Amstrad, has appeared in many models: 16K, 48K, 48K +, 128K+, +2, +3 and +2A. Only the last three are now available new.
PRICE + 2 with built-in tape deck costs £139; + 3 with one built-in external disk drive £199. Other models available very cheap second-hand.
MEMORY Mostly obvious from names! +2 and +3 have 128K.
PROCESSOR 8-bit Zilog Z80, 4MHz.
RESOLUTION 256x192 (eight colours onscreen, but only two colours can be used in any given 8x8-pixel block. This often causes 'colour clash' in games that use a lot of colour.)
COLOUR PALETTE 8 colours that can be increased to 16.
SOUND + 128K, +2 and +3 have 3-channel output via monitor or TV. 16K/48K/+ 48K have 1-channel output via built-in speaker.
VIDEO All have TV port. + 128K, +2 and + 3 also have RGB ports.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Mostly tape. Early models load from ordinary cassette player (extra cost), +2 has built-in tape deck. +3 takes 3-inch disks though many people prefer to use tape because of disk-loading problems; one built-in reversible single-sided external disk drive can format disks to 180K each side.
PORTS 16K/48K/+ 48K expansion port, two 3.5mm jack sockets to connect the Spectrum to a tape recorder and a TV port.

+ 128K has expansion port, TV port, Vero phone connector for MIDI/RS-232 serial, two 3.5mm jack sockets, RGB port, Vero phone connector for add-on keypad.

+ 2 has expansion port, TV port, RGB port and Vero phone connectors as + 128K; also two nonstandard joystick ports and a 3.5mm socket for outputting sound.

+ 3 is as + 128K and also has Centronics parallel printer port and port for second disk drive. Early +3s have two 3.5mm audio in/out jack sockets, later models have one which performs the same function. Also MIDI port on the later models.

The recently-released +2A is virtually identical to the +3, apart from the fact that it has no disk drive. On the outside, it looks like a +2 except that it's black, rather than grey. However, it has several serious incompatibility problems and will not work with many +2 add-ons.
SOFTWARE The Spectrum is the biggest-selling home computer in the UK and (at an informed guess) at least 2,000 games are available. Until the growth of 16-bit this year, most of the great classics were Spectrum titles – many still are. A wide range of utilities is also available, but the machine is inadequate for graphics work. Slow/unreliable loading and small memory cause severe problems with any data processing (eg accounting, word processing).

CONSOLES

NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

PRICE The standard version includes console, game controller (used instead of keyboard/joystick) and one game at £99.95. The Deluxe version includes game controller, light gun, ROB (Robotic Operated Buddy) robot and two games at £149.95.
MEMORY Not known, but software cartridges are mostly 256K.
PROCESSOR 8-bit.
RESOLUTION 256x240 (up to 52 colours onscreen).
COLOUR PALETTE 52 colours and shades.
SOUND 3-channel sound including speech synthesis played through a TV.
VIDEO TV only. The Nintendo cannot be used with a monitor.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Special unerasable Nintendo cartridge. Despite some efforts by independent firms, no disk or tape software is available for the Nintendo. The Japanese-owned manufacturer once developed a disk drive but abandoned it because of piracy problems.
PORTS Game controller, TV, cartridge.
SOFTWARE Games only, £20-£25 each. So far little software has been released in the UK, though hundreds are available in Japan and the US (see Back Bytes, TGM012). Nintendo now promise at least two new games per month in the UK – some are reviewed this issue.



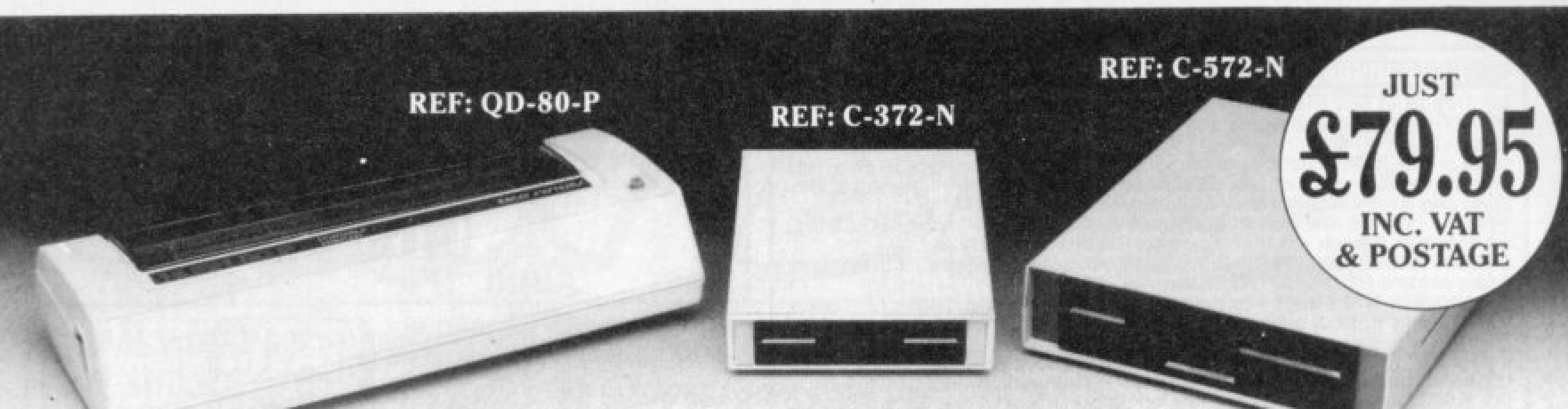
PC ENGINE

PRICE £175 for console, power pack, joypad and monitor interface (RGB or SCART). Available only from *Micro Media, 32 Claygate Road, Wimbleb-ury, Staffordshire WS12 5RN.*
MEMORY NEC, the Japanese manufacturers, are secretive. Believed to very large.
PROCESSOR Secret again. Believed to be a specially-designed 8-bit chip, though some reports say 16-bit.
RESOLUTION 320x256 (up to 32 background colours and 32 sprite colours onscreen).
COLOUR PALETTE 512 colours and shades.
SOUND 6-channel through TV or monitor.
VIDEO TV or monitor (via supplied interface).
SOFTWARE FORMAT Special unerasable PC Engine cartridge – no tapes or disks. CD-ROM games (loaded from disks like music CDs) are becoming available in Japan.
PORTS Cartridge slot, one joystick port, large expansion port (possibly to connect PC Engines for two-player games).
SOFTWARE Games only. About a dozen are available in the UK.

SEGA MASTER SYSTEM

PRICE Games console including light gun, game controller and one game retails at £79.95.
RESOLUTION 256x192 (up to 64 colours onscreen).
COLOUR PALETTE 64 colours and shades.
SOUND 3-channel sound played through TV.
VIDEO TV only. The Sega cannot be used with a monitor.
SOFTWARE FORMAT Special unerasable Sega cartridge – no tapes or disks.
PORTS Cartridge slot, two game controller ports (for two-player games) and TV port.
SOFTWARE Games only, mainly conversions of Sega coin-op games.

This section is updated every month and we make every effort to ensure the information is accurate. Let us know if we've missed anything!



THE HUSH RANGE

THE SILENT PORTABLE PRINTER

The HUSH-80 from Ferrotec is a small portable thermal printer, quiet in operation, which is ideally suited for home use, office back-up and everywhere when NLQ isn't required. Fast and efficient – no pretensions to anything else. Easy to operate, quick to load and simple to service. A friend to the budget conscious, a professional product at an economic price.

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FERROTEC

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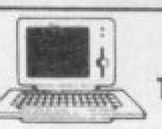
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GUIDE TO PRINTERS

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but there'll always be times when you need to get it all down in black and white. And for anyone interested in word processing, desktop publishing, accounting or dozens of other applications, a printer is the most important thing you'll buy (apart from the computer and software, of course).

Printers are expensive. Well, they needn't be – micro veterans probably remember those smudgy ZX thermal printers that were available five years ago for about £50. But a high-quality impact printer, which actually strikes the paper typewriter-style, is a complex piece of engineering. And it also includes electronic components such as a buffer (see Glossary box).

Moreover, the prices are probably artificially increased because most printer-buyers are businesspeople who can afford a few hundred pounds.

One of the cheapest dot-matrix printers around is Amstrad's 9-pin DMP 3160, at £199. And though 9-pin printers are often sneered at, they're perfectly adequate for everyday use – the cult of the 24-pin printer comes from businesses which don't want anyone to realise they're not using a £2,000 typewriter!

There's only one hidden extra in most printers (apart from the paper): the cable to connect it to the computer. Some printers come complete with cable; if not, expect to pay £5-10.

New ribbons for dot-matrix printers cost from £3 upwards, though ribbons can be reinked cheaper (see Printer Extras box).

Costly alternatives
Besides impact printers, there are four other main kinds.

Ink-jet printers and laser printers are generally expensive and necessary only for desktop publishing or other applications where high quality is essential.

Thermal printers are, today, mostly used for colour printing and run into thousands of pounds.

Finally, plotters are used for precision drawing – they actually use a pen rather than a printhead. Again, they're horribly expensive (ranging from £600 to £10,000+), and really only useful for computer-aided design. Penman Products used to sell a £200 plotter, and though they've gone out of business a second-hand one might be found.

Glorious colour
Multiple-colour printing is usually pricy too, because not only does the printer need to 'know' what character to print, it also has to process information on which colour to print it.

Of course, you can always put a coloured ribbon in an ordinary printer so *all* your text is red/green/whatever.

A future Back Bytes feature will cover colour printing.

MODEL **Amstrad DMP 3160**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 160 cps, NLQ 40 cps
BUFFER 8K
FONTS 2 draft and 2 NLQ, including IBM character sets
NOTE Epson-compatible
PRICE £199

MODEL **Amstrad LQ3500**
TYPE 24-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 135-160 cps, NLQ 45-54 cps
BUFFER 7K
FONTS 1 draft, 1 NLQ
PRICE £401

MODEL **Citizen HQP 40**
TYPE 24-pin dot-matrix
BUFFER 24K
NOTE Add-on available to make this into a colour printer
PRICE £499

MODEL **Citizen LSP-100**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 175 cps, correspondence 40 cps
BUFFER 4K
FONTS 2 fonts in correspondence mode
PRICE £245

MODEL **Epson LQ500**
TYPE 24-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 150 cps, LQ 50 cps
BUFFER 8K
FONTS 1 draft, 2 LQ
NOTE Particulary suited for graphics, with a resolution of 360x180 dpi
PRICE £442

MODEL **Epson LX-800**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 180 cps, NLQ 25 cps
BUFFER 3K
FONTS 2 draft, 2 NLQ plus IBM character set
PRICE £316

MODEL **NEC P2200 Pinwriter**
TYPE 24-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 140-168 cps, NLQ 47-56 cps
BUFFER 8K
FONTS 1 draft, 4 NLQ
PRICE £454

MODEL **Panasonic KX-P1083**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 240 cps, NLQ 40 cps
BUFFER 6K
FONTS 11 character sets for different countries (eg because printing French language requires accents)
NOTE Epson-compatible and IBM Proprinter-compatible
PRICE £350

MODEL **Star Micronics LC-10**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 120 cps, NLQ 20 cps
BUFFER 4K
FONTS 1 draft, 6 NLQ
NOTE Four-colour version available for £259
PRICE £229

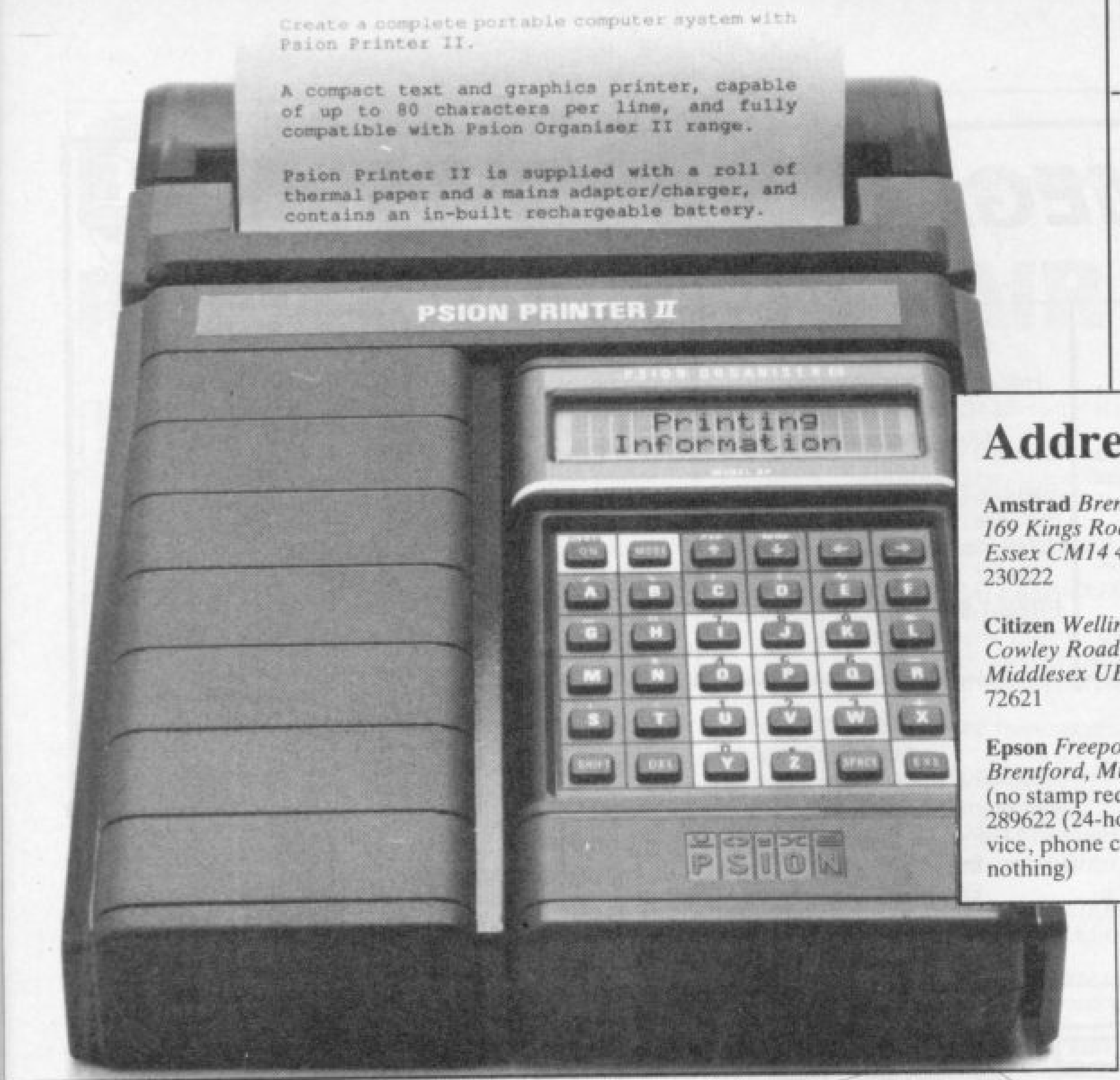
MODEL **Tandy DMP-107**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 100 cps, correspondence 20 cps
BUFFER 3K
FONTS 1 draft, 1 correspondence
PRICE £251

MODEL **Tandy DMP-132**
TYPE 9-pin dot-matrix
SPEED draft 50-120 cps, NLQ 20-24 cps
BUFFER 3K
FONTS 1 draft, plus IBM special characters
PRICE £286

MODEL **Tandy DWP-230**
TYPE Daisywheel
SPEED 20 cps
BUFFER 3K
PRICE £286



Low-cost dot-matrix: Tandy's DMP-132



Back to the bad old days? The Printer II for Psion's yuppie Organiser II may bring back memories of smudgy Spectrum thermal printing . . . but if you must put your Organised thoughts on paper at approximately 45 cps, contact Psion at Psion House, Harcourt Street, London W1H 1DT ☎ (01) 723-9408 and ask for a copy of Psion News, okay yah?

Addresses

Amstrad *Brentwood House, 169 Kings Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4EF* ☎ (0277) 230222

Citizen *Wellington House, 4/10 Cowley Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 2XW* ☎ (0895) 72621

Epson *Freepost TK984, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 8BR* (no stamp required) ☎ (0800) 289622 (24-hour answering service, phone call costs you nothing)

NEC Technologies *Castle Farm Campus, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire TS2 5SA* ☎ (0952) 620440

Panasonic *300-318 Bath Road, Slough, Berkshire SL1 6JB* ☎ (0753) 34522

Star Micronics *Craven House, 40 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, London W5 2BS* ☎ (01) 840-1800

Tandy *Tandy Centre, Leamore Lane, Walsall WS2 7PS* ☎ (0922) 710000

Glossary

Buffer The printer's own onboard memory. Because the micro sends text to the printer faster than it can print it, it has to be stored in the memory. Buffer size is measured in kilobytes (K), like computer memory.
One advantage of a large buffer is that you can return to using the computer while the printer is still working, because it 'remembers' the text itself.

Character Any letter, number or printed symbol.

Compatible See *Epson-compatible*.

Correspondence A print *mode* supposedly suitable for letter-writing.

cps The speed of a printer, measured in characters per second. Different *modes* have different speeds.

Daisywheel A kind of printer which is, at heart, a computer-controlled typewriter. Each *character* is a moulded shape on a small circular 'daisywheel'; the daisywheel is rotated so that different characters can be hit against the paper.
The print quality is generally better than *dot-matrix*, but new *fonts* have to be physically added to the printer by fitting a new daisywheel.
Daisywheel printers tend to be more expensive than dot-matrix models.

Dot The name of a *character* in the popular British TV show *EastEnders*. Also a term used in computer printing: every character from a *dot-matrix* printer is made up of dots.

Dot-matrix A kind of printer which produces *characters* as a series of dots in vertical lines. It can also print graphics.

Draft A quick, low-quality print *mode* suitable for printing where the quality isn't important – eg notes for your own use.

Epson-compatible The Epson FX-80 was an early low-cost *dot-matrix* printer, which set the standard by which others are judged.
When a printer is said to be Epson-compatible, this means it will work with software which works with the Epson FX-80 – as most packages do.

Font Typeface. In the context of printers, font often means the same as *mode*, but some printers offer fonts that actually look different rather than just have different quality.

LQ Letter-quality; a high-quality print *mode*.

Mode When you use a printer you choose the mode (usually by flicking a switch on the printer itself) depending on the quality of output you need. *NLQ* is usually the best, while *draft* is faster.

NLQ Near-letter quality. On *dot-matrix* printers, this print *mode* supposedly gives output as good as a *daisywheel*.
NLQ is usually achieved by printing a line, moving the paper half a *dot*, and printing the line again – giving the impression of thicker *characters* without space between the dots. It's slower than other modes.

Pins *Dot-matrix* printers produce each *character* as a series of vertical lines. The number of pins is the number of dots in each vertical line – so a 24-pin printer gives better quality than a 9-pin.
9-pin printers are being superseded by 24-pins, so they can often be picked up for discounted prices. Very early dot-matrix printers were 7-pin.

Printhead The part of a printer that touches the paper to print each *character*.

Sheet-feeder The device that pulls new sheets of paper into the printer. Most printers have built-in sheet-feeders that work with continuous paper, but not with single sheets (see Printer Extras box).

Printer extras

Acoustic box – padded with thick foam to reduce printer noise, this also acts as a printer stand. As always, phone to check there's a model that will fit your printer. Prices start from £38.95, depending on printer. Kador, *Unit 4, Pontcynon Industrial Estate, Abercynon, Mid Glamorgan CF45 4EP* ☎ (0443) 740281.

MaxaFit This sheet-feeder handles single sheets of paper – headed stationery etc – and saves you the trouble of putting them in one at a time. It fits most printers but it's worth phoning to check that your model is one of them. £17.50 from Margin Maker, *121 Gresgam Road, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2AJ* ☎ (0784) 452677.

Printer stands Stands to rest the printer on cost from £14 upwards from Manor Court Supplies, *Glen Celyn House, Penybout, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5SY*.

Reinking At least two firms will reink old fabric cartridge ribbons, giving them a new lease of working life.
Aladdix charge £1.45 per ribbon: *Freepost, Eyemouth TD14 5BR* (no stamp required) ☎ (08907) 50965.
S+U Brothers charge 99p per ribbon: *Hillview Post Office, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire G83 0QD* ☎ (0389) 52680.

GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT REPAIR SERVICES

No matter how much you care for a computer, eventually something goes wrong. And you can bet your life it'll happen after the guarantee has expired, so you can forget about sending it back to the manufacturers. In most cases, they won't want to know.

So TGM has compiled a list of top computer-repair firms together with details of the machines they service, cost, and warranty.

- Before packing your computer off to a repair firm, check to see if your local computer dealer can recommend a local repair outfit. It's easier to deal with a local firm, because you can always go round and knock at their door.
- Failing that, it's time to look at one of the firms in the TGM guide. Phone the company you choose and try and get a rough guide of the cost of the repair, how long it will take – and whether they'll give a warranty to do it again for free if the repair doesn't work.
- Make sure that the quoted price includes parts, labour, VAT, and return postage.
- When sending your computer by post, pack it carefully – preferably in the original box – or you could end up paying a lot more than you reckoned.
- Always include a letter with your address, telephone number and the effects of the fault.
- Send the whole package by recorded delivery – just 24p on top of the stamp cost – and pay the extra cash for an advice-of-delivery slip (25p if you ask for it when you post the package, 65p if you leave it till later).

That way you know it's got there, you can hassle the repair firm if they claim it's lost in the post, and you can sleep at nights too.

COMPANY **BCL (Best Computers Ltd)**
ADDRESS *Galaxy Audio Visual, first floor, 230 Tottenham Court Road, London W1A 3AP*
☎ (01) 631-0139 or 580-6640
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All 8-bit and 16-bit models including PC-compatibles.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED All.
PRICES A typical small repair would cost £15-£20.
WARRANTY Six months.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Free estimates. Galaxy Audio Visual also sell micros.

COMPANY **The Computer Factory**
ADDRESS *Analytic Engineering Ltd, Unit 18A, Grainger Road Industrial Estate, Southend SS2 5DD*
☎ (0707) 618455
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All major models except Atari.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Disk drives and printers.
PRICES £7-£40.
WARRANTY Three months.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Free estimates.

COMPANY **GSF Services**
ADDRESS *113 Mountbatten Road, Braintree, Essex CM7 6TP*
☎ (0376) 46637
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrums.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES Spectrum 48K £10.50, Spectrum 128K £13.
WARRANTY Four months.

COMPANY **HS Computer Services**
ADDRESS *Unit 2, The Orchard, Warton, Preston, Lancashire PR4 1BE*
☎ (0772) 632686
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrums.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES From £14.95.
WARRANTY Three months.

COMPANY **Ladbrook Computing International**
ADDRESS *33 Ormskirk Road, Preston, Lancashire PR1 2QP*
☎ (0772) 21474 or 27236
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Mainly Atari.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers and disk drives.
PRICES According to machine – for example ST £34.50, XL/130 XE £23 (these prices include VAT).
WARRANTY Phone for information.

COMPANY **MP Electronics**
ADDRESS *Wendling, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2LZ*
☎ (0362) 87327
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, C64, BBC B, PC-compatibles – in fact all major makes *except* ST and Amiga.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, plotters, monitors, disk drives etc.
PRICES All-inclusive prices for most machines – 48K Spectrum £15, 128K Spectrum, BBC B and C64 £27.50, PCs from £20-£100+. These rates cover all faults *except* those caused by other people's botched repairs!
WARRANTY Phone for information.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Free estimates. £20 overhaul service for 48K Spectrums – MP Electronics replace sockets, keyboard membrane etc and will repair any faults that develop within six months of overhaul.

COMPANY **PM Engineering**
ADDRESS *Unit 8, New Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE17 4BG*
☎ (0480) 61394
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All home computers.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers, monitors and disk drives.
PRICES Phone. There's a set repair price for each computer, regardless of the fault and including all parts and labour.
WARRANTY Three months.

COMPANY **RA Electronics**
ADDRESS *133 London Road South, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0AX*
☎ (0502) 566289
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrums.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES Spectrum 48K £14, Spectrum 128K £20.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RA Electronics also sell components.

COMPANY **Video Vault Ltd**
ADDRESS *140 High Street West, Glossop, Derbyshire SK13 8HJ*
☎ (04574) 66555
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Most.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Phone.
PRICES From £19.95, according to machine.
WARRANTY Three months.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION While-you-wait service in Manchester.

COMPANY **VSE Technical Services**
ADDRESS Mercury Asset Management Youth Enterprise Centre, *8 Nursery Road, London SW9 8BP*
☎ (01) 738-7707
COMPUTERS REPAIRED All Spectrum, Amstrad, Atari and Commodore models.
PERIPHERALS Opus Discovery drive (partner Ian Vaudrey is official repairperson for the Sinclair Discovery Club).
PRICES Rough guide: £12.90 for Spectrum 48K or Spectrum +, £14.90 for Spectrum 128K, £15.90 for Spectrum +2, £21.90 for Opus Discovery. Prices include parts, labour, VAT and return postage.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION VSE Technical Services is run by young people with the help of a south London Youth Enterprise Centre.

COMPANY **Wight Computing Home Micros**
ADDRESS *122 High Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight PO33 2SU*
☎ (0983) 68978
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Most.
PERIPHERALS REPAIRED Printers and monitors, but check first that the service is available for older models.
PRICES According to the problem.
WARRANTY 90 days.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION Wight Computing will also check, clean etc computers which are not obviously faulty.

COMPANY **WTS Electronics**
ADDRESS *5-9 Portland Road, Luton, Bedfordshire LU4 8AT*
☎ (0582) 458375
COMPUTERS REPAIRED Spectrum, Commodore, BBC, VIC20, Amstrad CPC 464.
PERIPHERAL REPAIR Phone.
PRICES £14-£32, depending on machine.
WARRANTY Three months.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WTS Electronics promise to complete the repair within one week from the day they receive the machine.

Attention repair firms: If you would like a mention in the Back Bytes Repair page, please send the relevant details to Back Bytes, TGM, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*, including a phone number and the manager's name (for our files).



Joystick repair offer

Waggling is bad for you – even the most reliable joysticks can break after a few months' use, because there's so much strain on the moving parts. But now **Roebuck Designs** offer a £4.50 replacement service for all models.

Just send in your damaged stick, and Roebuck will quickly send back another of the same model – second-hand, but working perfectly. They'll then keep yours, repair it later, and send it to another customer.

The £4.50 price includes return postage.

Roebuck Designs: *Victory Works, Birds Hill, Letchworth, Hertfordshire SG6 1HX* ☎ (0462) 480723 or 480929.

TOOLBOX

A selection of products to make life bearable

Trilogic blitz for Commodores

Attendances were poor at November's London Commodore Show – who knows, maybe the apparent success of this year's PC Show put people off the Commodore event and the earlier Amstrad exhibition.

Whatever, Trilogic and others had plenty of handy add-ons for the C64 and Amiga, as TGM's Jason Sheldon discovered. In fact, there was so much we couldn't fit it all in – more next month!

Finding faults

C64 hardware needn't be so hard with two Trilogic add-ons – 64 Doctor and Drive Doctor.

64 Doctor offers intensive care for aging machines. It's an £18.99 diagnostic cartridge allowing you to test the keyboard, joystick ports, ROM, major chips and interrupts. (All it doesn't do is mend the fault.)

This handy little gadget just plugs into the cartridge port on the back of your C64 – no soldering required, just remember to turn the power off before inserting it.

First it checks the keyboard. A display of the C64 keyboard appears onscreen, and as you press the real keys one by one, each is displayed in reverse field (white on black). So if you press a key and nothing happens onscreen, there's a problem at your fingertips.

Still, even Spectrum-owners should be able to tell if a key works *without* a gadget . . .

The next test checks the joystick ports, in a similar way, and then the input/output (I/O) ports come under scrutiny. The screen displays the various ports, and the chips associated with them. The test also checks the banking capabilities of the VIC chip.

Throughout, any fault detected will result in a reverse-field display, so all you may need to do is buy the component and replace it yourself.

One warning: even Trilogic are not quite sure whether 64 Doctor works on a C128, as the chip layouts are quite different.

Disk Doctor

The £14.99 Disk Doctor package contains a disk and a cassette. The software is supplied on the cassette – logical, because if you're using Disk Doctor there's presumably something wrong with your drive. The disk is inserted in the drive and used for tests.

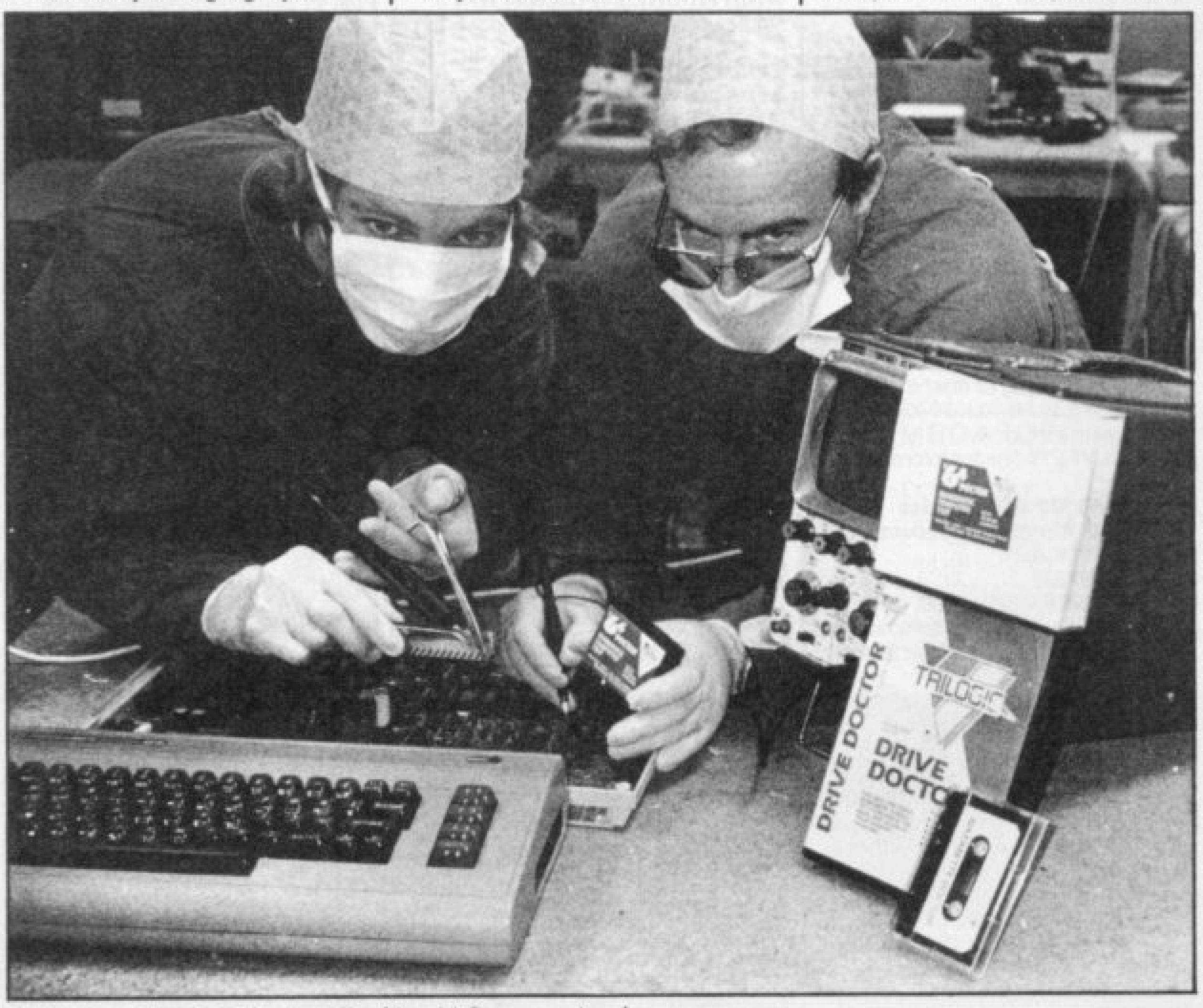
Disk Doctor checks the speed of the drive, backstop setting, head alignment, and head movement. Again, just one warning: it's quite easy to get slightly electrocuted if you're not careful.

Put your foot on it

'This is the future of flight simulators and car-racing games,' they say – yes, a foot-operated joystick. These seem to be catching on, with a Nintendo version available in the USA and another planned for the Konix Slipstream (mind you, the Nintendo one has apparently flopped).

Trilogic's new model is a microswitched steering wheel approximately 12 inches across, which clamps onto a tabletop. There's a gear-change selector, a boost switch (fast or slow), and two foot pedals (on a flight simulator, these would act as rudder controls). There's also a joystick port so a conventional joystick can be used with it.

Software compatibility may be a problem, though – and anyway, the gadget won't be out for a while. No price has been fixed.



Only when I laugh: Trilogic staff taking 64 Doctor seriously

Amiga sounds good

For my money – or indeed yours – Trilogic's *Amiga Audio Digitizer* is the best sound sampler around for Commodore's 16-bit baby. At £27.99, it's a lot better than Datel's model, currently going for around £69.99 including software)

Though the Trilogic sample doesn't come with software, most well-known packages can be used – or even cheap public-domain software. And after creating a sample (limited only by the software and memory) you can include it in music packages like *Audio Master* or *Perfect Sound* and create music masterpieces.

Talking C64!

Chat to your computer! Write your own BASIC programs to incorporate speech! Trilogic's £14.99 Speech Maker 64 cartridge has the following features:

- Ready to talk immediately on powerup.
- Easy to use.
- No software to be loaded.
- Does not reduce memory for programming.
- Interrupt-driven, allows for graphics, sound and speech.
- Four intonation types.
- Key voicing on depression of keys.
- Infinite vocabulary (through use of allophones).
- Preprogrammed library of 234 words.
- Extended BASIC commands are compatible with Commodore's *Magic Voice* software and enable the cartridge module to run *Magic Voice* software written in BASIC.
- Existing base of software specifically written for ADMAN Speech Synthesiser.

Amiga Mini Speakers

These are just the things you need for your Amiga – if your monitor makes alien-zapping music sound like Aled Jones, just plug them in and shake the floorboards!

About 12" tall and 5" wide, these speakers are powered from the serial port, so no batteries are

needed (which is a good job, because the box states 'batteries not included . . . ').

A remote volume control is also supplied, and a built-in equaliser power booster, though one Trilogic person admitted 'I haven't quite found what they do yet . . . '.

And to really hear the Amiga's stereo effects, the speakers can be placed 4 feet apart.

£19.99 from – of course – Trilogic, who also offer Mini-Amp 1 at £14.99. This is much the same as the speaker set, but outputs through headphones (£3.99 a pair from Trilogic).

Trilogic *Unit 1, 253 New Works Road, Low Moor, Bradford BD12 0QP* ☎ (0274) 691115.

Printer port problems?

Now you can use any port without a storm . . . thanks to Star Micronics, who've released a serial-to-parallel printer converter. At £63.25, Star's SPC-10 connects a printer's Centronics port to the micro's RS232 port, and provides full service including handshaking and adjustable baud rate/word length/parity.

Star Micronics: *Craven House, 40 Uxbridge Road, London W5* ☎ (01) 840-1800.

16-bit disk management

Disk directories are like London – if you don't have an A-Z, you'll never find what you're looking for. And that's where Xpedients come in.

First they produced a Filofax-style binder for storing disk information – and now comes *The Disk Organiser*, a £29.99 PC package which analyses disk information and provides a printout. ST and Amiga versions are expected in the New Year, with Amstrad PCW and Apple Macintosh also planned.

Load *The Disk Organiser*, let it read all your disks, store the information to floppy or hard disk – and then output customised reports which can include filename, file size, your own description of the file, which disk it's on, remaining disk space, etc.

The software produces an ASCII file, so you can edit your disk notes in a word processor too.

Package deals

The price includes Xpedients's pseudo-Filofax notebook to keep the results tidy, and 200 pages worth of continuous paper. *The Disk Organiser* is also available for £39.99 with Mirrorsoft's *File Rescue Plus* (software which recovers lost or damaged files, normally £29.99) – or, if you already have the notebook, you can get just the Xpedients software for £19.99.

Xpedients: *10-16 Mottram Street, Middle Hillgate, Stockport SK1 3PA* ☎ (061) 480-1952.

Souped-up STs

Reach out and touch your ST with the latest from Eagle Business Computers – a sensitive screen. At £399, this software-and-hardware combo for *GEM*-based applications allows you to select commands by touching the screen rather than pointing the mouse.

The flat, transparent touch-sensitive screen fits over the monitor or TV, and plugs into the serial port. Of course, there could be problems if you want to use the serial port for something else while fondling the screen . . . so Eagle are working on a version which, more sensibly, plugs into the mouse port.

Go-faster card

Meanwhile, ST artists wanting faster graphics manipulation can speed up their machines with Eagle's £299 accelerator card. According to Eagle Managing Director Steven Griffiths, 'it doubles the speed of the machine' – though there haven't been benchtests to prove that yet.

In effect, the accelerator card replaces the ST's Motorola 68000 processor with a more advanced model, the 68030. This is said to equal the speed of Intel's 80386 chip, currently all the rage in PC-land.

Griffiths says the card is 'primarily aimed at people who use the ST for DTP, graphics and emulation'.

Eagle Computers: *second floor, Glamorgan House, David Street, Cardiff CF1 2EH* ☎ (0222) 390286.



COMPETITION RESULTS

MANHATTAN DEALERS COMPETITION

Silmarils put an Amiga A500 up for grabs, complete with TV modulator. The lucky winner is Mathew Netherwood, Huddersfield HD4 6RA.

WE ARE NOT AMUSED

Domark offered a trip to Limehouse Studios to see behind the scenes of *Spitting Image* on Saturday 17th December. The overall winner, chosen from all the entrants, including those from sister magazines *Crash* and *Zzap*, will be presented with a Spiting Image puppet of themselves. The winner is Nick Hawkes of London.

The 3 second prize winners will receive a *Spitting Image* video and book. They are: Andrew Watson, Glasgow G$4 3BA, Derek L Marley Newark NG22 9SJ, Hal Maugham, Norfolk IP24 2ND.

15 runners up will each receive a *Spitting Image* book: Stephen Hanrahan, Slough Sl1 2EJ. Nigel Parsons, Cardiff CF1 9DY. Christopher Pearcey, Huddersfield HD3 4AU. David Brown, Waltham DN37 0LA. Richard Davis, London N12 7LS. Andrew Wilson, Essex RM2 6QD. Stuart Rawes, Liverpool L25 0NX. Peter Young, Saddleworth OL3 5EG. Malc Sims, Kent CT1 1YF. Howard Thorpe, Southampton SO1 8AX. Matthew Harry, Plymouth PL3 5RE. Jaron Collis, N.Ireland BT20 3AQ. Richard Heath, Leek ST13 5RU. Colin McBurnie, Dewsbury WF12 7PL. Kevin Patton, Herts HP2 5TG.

POPERPLAY COMPETITION

Powerplay offered a Sony Sound Bag radio/cassette player for the winner, a 3 inch FD 9B black 'n' white from Sony as a second prize, and a third prize of a Sony CFS 930 sports stereo radio/cassette player.

The winner is Paul Speed,Lincoln LN6 0NU.

The second prize goes to Mrs C Cox, Basingstoke G21 2HU. Third prize goes to R Coveney, telford TF2 7DF.

Nine runners up each receive joysticks: Matthew Alexander, Shrewsbury SY2 5LY. Craig Reid, Perth PH1 3BY. Andrew Mason, Lincoln LN5 9AQ. Howard Thorpe, Southampton SO1 8AX. Simon Wiles, Hants PO7 6PR. D Taylor, Cheshire CW9 7BH. Seb Geddes, Caithness KW6 6ET. A Salisbury, Darlaston WS10 8NE. Jason Sims, Dorset BH21 2NG.

The Games machine

READER CLASSIFIEDS



PIRATES STAY AT SEA!

TGM will not knowingly place adverts for pirated software. TGM does not condone piracy, and in an effort to control this we will not place any advert which does not include a full name and address. Code names are not acceptable. Thank you for your cooperation.

WANTED

Wanted: Amiga A500 with possible 1MB memory, modulator. Swap for an excellent conditioned, boxed, Atari 520 STFM, 1/2 Meg, mouse mat, Euromax joystick, disk box, dust cover, 50 disks, Atari VCS or sell £300. Tel: 01-907 3398 (Ricky).

Sega with 8 or more games. I have a C64 with over £300 worth of wicked games, 2 joysticks, 2 datasettes, serviced last month. Ask for Chris (0344) 428105. Will sell for £130. Offers considered.

FOR SALE

Atari 1 Meg memory upgrade £80 includes fitting and return postage for ST/M/FM's. Would consider swap for Hi-Res monitor or Amstrad colour or anything interesting. Tel: 0495 272 358 (Mark).

CBM 64C, datasette, joystick, mouse, over £200 of software, inc. Bionic Commando, Nebulus, The Sentinel, plus magazines etc. Only £150 ono. Tel: Southport (0704) 27690 evenings.

Atari 800XL boxed with manuals, introduction cassettes, data cassette (works but needs repair, not included in price), joysticks, 42 games worth £200+. Will sell for £95. Phone 01 361 9054. Ask for Wayne.

CBM 64C, £300 games include FM2, Tracky Man, W.G.II, Last Ninja II, Imposs. Mission 2, also two 2CN's, back up board, two joysticks, Music Maker. All for £250 ono. Tel: Criss 0703 735152 after 'Neighbours'.

48K Spectrum, triple port joystick interface, Kempston Pro joystick, top games inc. Matchday II, Driller, Gunship, Olympic Challenge etc., cassette recorder plus mags. Boxed as new £85 ono. Tel: 0484 865020 evenings.

Spectrum+ inc. 150 games, many original, including Driller, Platoon, Gunship, Magnificent 7 etc., cassette recorder, Currah speech pack, 52 issues of Input (complete set) £120 ono. Tel: 051 424 8595 and ask for Andy.

Want a micro – MSX 64K Sanyo plus cassette plus printer – books – mags plus games – £150 – £200 – George – 0707 338400 after 6pm.

CBM 64, Excellerator Plus disk drive, 2 printers, mouse, over £800 software. Value £1138. Asking for £550 ono. Telephone (0532) 741017.

Money. For a free info pack on how to make a fortune in a few months send SAE to: H.Lock, 26 Cricketers Road, Arlesey, Beds. SG15 6SP. Don't forget to enclose a SAE quoting 'Money Kit'.

CBM64C, excellent condition, datasette, 2 joysticks, mouse, 36 original games worth £230+, mags – Zzap, Commodore User, Games Machine, manual. Only £160. Phone (074 575) 359. Ask for Joe after 5pm.

Amstrad CPC 464 Mono, modulator, disk drive, AMX mouse, 64K rampack, joystick, games inc. Platoon, Elite, Gauntlet, etc. Great Value, only £250. Tel: Lincoln (0522) 595152 (after 6pm). The buyer must collect.

Amstrad 464, colour monitor, disk drive, thermal printer, 256K upgrade, speech, tons of games tape and disk, Pyrapev, Advanced Art Studio, Mini Office II, books, mags, joystick. £450 ono. (0375) 679301 after 7. Buyer collects.

Atari ST with mouse, games, books, and disk box. Good condition £350 ono or will swap for Amiga. Also Spectrum+ and games for sale £50 ono. Phone Justin 0932 787931.

Spectrum 128+2, complete with two joysticks and double interface, mags and over £600 worth of original software. Perfect condition. Offers over £160, 01-209 0068 evenings, ask for Antony.

Atari ST games for sale: Wizball, Predator, Ranarama, The Sentinel, Eagles Nest, Out Run and Bubble Bobble. Only £8 each, and all originals. Call Jake on 01-806 2739 after 7pm.

MSX 64K plus cassettes plus £1,800 software, mags, books also black and white TV. All for £300 ono. Phone David after 4pm on 0304 831259.

Bugs! and other electronic gadgets, quality at low prices. For our new, free catalogue phone or write to: Mercury Electronics, 258 Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3EG. Tel: 01 940 2644.

Atari 520 ST-FM, over £300 worth of software, many blank disks, Euromax Pro joystick, games include Outrun, S.T.O.S., Starglider 2, Corruption etc. In perfect condition. Will sell for £325 ono. Phone Robert Sturt on Dereham (0362) 697822.

Sega console, 22 games including Space Harrier 3D, Shinobi, Missile Defence 3D, Outrun with Light Phaser, 3D glasses, joystick, all boxed as new under guarantee. Sell for £350 ono. Worth £550. Bargain. Cobham (0932) 65358.

Spectrum+2 for sale. 64 games e.g. Head Over Heels, Combat School, all originals, 2 interfaces, Cheetah joystick. Perfect condition, still boxed. Worth £400+ new, sell for only £200. Phone (0222) 614361 after 7pm.

CBM 1541 disk drive and over 100 disks. All for only £110 ono. Phone (0460) 53109 and ask for Russ.

Atari 800XL, D/D, 1029 printer, tape deck, £300 worth of software, books, mags, joysticks, blank disks, modem. All for only £350. Phone 01 254 6359 after 6pm.

C64 games for sale. Titles include Game Set & Match, Konami Coin-Ops Compilations, Road Blasters, Skate Crazy, Bangkok Knights, Combat School, Impossible Mission 2, Buggy Boy, Empire Strikes Back plus more on tape. Lot for £60. Tel: Earl 01 691 4852.

Sega Master System for sale. Comes with Shinobi, Wonderboy, Wonderboy 2, Actionfighter, Choplifter, Teddy Boy, Out Run, Kung Fu Kid, Rocky, World Soccer, Hang On and Alien Syndrome. £100. Noel Mitchell, 8 Tardree Grove, Ballymena, Co Antrim, N. Ireland BT43 7BJ.

Nintendo, Zapper Gun plus seven cartridges, worth well over £150. Will sell for £65 only. Phone (01) 519 2777 Extn 134 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm). Ask for Wendy Cleaver.

Spectrum+3, mouse, Multiface 3, blank disks, Music Machine, 150+ software titles. Write to Mr Eric Austin, 30 Provene Gardens, Waltham Chase, Soton, Hants, for a complete list. Will accept £400 ovno.

Buy my Commodore 64 for £129 and get my datasette, 2 joysticks, £350 worth of games software, £100 worth of magazines, manuals and lots of extras, free!!! Phone (021) 550 6489.

Atari 520STFM for sale, + mouse mat + heaps of games, Virus, Arkanoid I and II etc. + more. Worth £650, will sell for £399 or swap with Amiga A500: Phone 01 263 7335 (Wayne).

Commodore disk drive 1570 £100 ono. Phone 0925 814920 after 7pm, as new. Freeze Frame £20, Games £3.00 each.

ST Super Pack originals, all genuine double sided software for sale eg. Summer Olympiad £7.00, Thundercats £7.00. For full list send SAE to Michael Robinson, 20 Kidderminster Road, Slough, Berkshire SL2 2AZ. Instant reply.

Amstrad 6128, colour monitor, Multiface 2, 2 joysticks, dustcovers, tape deck, mouse, disks + box, software inc Parrotry Plus, Gryzor, Gauntlet 2, Match Day 2, Daley Thompson Olympic, Magnificent 7, mags + binders. 1 year old, mint condition. Worth £900+ sell for £395 ono. Phone 0792 896237.

C64, tape deck, joystick, over £350 software including Predator, Apollo 18, and many others. All originals. Will sell for £140 ono or will swap for Atari 520 STFM. Tel: Lee (051) 426 6773 after 4pm.

C64, boxed, C2N, joysticks, Music Maker, over £200 worth original software (incl. Elite, Gauntlet, I.K., L'Board, World Games) plus mags. Worth £520, sell for £210 ono. Tel: Anthony (061) 747 8209 after 4pm.

Atari STFM, 16'ish great games, everything in excellent condition, mouse and PD software included. A bargain at £300. Phone Simon on (0252) 723914.

Amiga A500 plus 5.25" disk drive, with software, boxed as new and still under guarantee. Will sell for £480 ono. Tel: 01 571 9324 after 4.50pm on weekdays and anytime over the weekend.

C-64, cassette unit, 2 joysticks, mouse and cheese graphic software, speech unit. £800+ of software. All the greats, Last Ninja, Skate or Die, etc – £250 ono. Phone Hemel Hempstead (0442) 3047 ask for Neelam.

Sega games for sale. New releases, all excellent condition. Send SAE to 3, Chaumont Way, Stockton-on-Forest, York YO3 9TX. First come first served!

Amstrad CPC464 with colour monitor, over £400 worth of games including Dark Side, Cybernoid and Starglider, Cheetah Mach 1+ included. Also have several issues of AA and ACV. Will sell for £350. Phone after 5pm 061 434 8674.

Atari 520 STFM, 28 games, joystick, utilities, disk box and 40 blank disks, cost new £650. Sell for £350 ono. Tel: Huddersfield (0484) 531496.

CBM64, two C2N's, two joysticks, mouse/cheese, reset switch. Robcom 10, loadsa games including Winter Edition, Champ Wrestling, Int. Soccer cartridge and most sports, most ZZAPS, £160 ono for quick sale. Tel: 01 474 8511.

Atari ST originals for sale: Virus, Backlash, Universal Military Simulator, Rampage, Galax, Trivial Pursuit, Test Drive, Carrier Command. £7 each. Write to Malcolm Bruce, 10F Logie Avenue, Aberdeen AB2 7TN.

Atari 520STFM including joystick, mouse, loadsa mags, disk box, dust cover, mouse mat and £350 worth of software. 6 months old, mint condition, worth £650. Sell for £400 ono. Phone Sarfie on 01 748 4820.

Sega System, boxed as new, still under guarantee. Includes two joypads, After Burner, Out Run, Rocky, Zillion, World Soccer, Astro Warrior and Hang On. Worth £250, will sell for £140. Tel: Mayfield (0435) 872091.

C64 with over £250 worth of software inc. IK+, Barbarian 1&2, Bubble Bobble, most Leaderboard Courses, Metrocross plus Quickshot 2 and owner's manual. All for £150 ono. Phone Stuart on 0440 705635. A definite bargain!

Acorn Electron with 320K 3.5" disk drive (Plus 3), Plus 1 interface, twin joysticks, 125 games, boxed. Worth £1300, will sell for £220 or swap for ST or Sega of similar selling value. Phone (0327) 72561 after 4.30pm.

Spectrum 48K, tape recorder, £300 worth of games, Lo-profile keyboard, Kempston Pro 5000 joystick and interface. Cost £450, sell for only £85. Phone: 061 440 8982 ask for Paul.

Sega system, Out Run, Wonder Boy, Global Defence, Hang On, Astro Warrior, Quickshot joystick, 15 issues of C&VG and TGM. Boxed as new, superb condition. £90 ono. Sorry can't split. Phone IMI: 01-802 5803.

Atari 520 STFM, only 4 months old, boxed with manuals, mouse, magazines, joystick and £400 of games. Worth £700, sell for £395 (ideal Xmas present). Phone: 01-363 9031.

Amiga 500, as new, including TV modulator, 2 joysticks, mouse mat, blank disks with box, Deluxe Paint, Interceptor, Marble Madness and remote colour TV. Bargain at £400 or will split. Phone 0462 684961.

BBC Model 'B', 200K dual disk drives, joystick, speech synthesiser chip, blank disks, Acorn D.F.S., books, over £600 of software. Worth £1440, sell for £500 ono. Phone Dominic (061) 483 6207. Bargain of the year!

Amstrad CPC 6128, disk drive, green screen monitor, £300 worth of software, 40 disks, ready for use, lots of magazines, all literature, leads, joystick, mouse, cassette deck. Only £300 ono. Tel: (0304) 853284 after 5pm.

Spectrum 48K for sale with Saga 1 keyboard, joystick, interface, sound booster, data recorder, 30 games, nearly all Crash Smashes. Phone: 0955 5542.

CBM64, tape deck, boxed, £400 worth of software. Cost £600 sell £150. Also Sega system, boxed, 7 games including Rocks, S.D.I. Cost £220 sell £80. Write to: – RK, 4B Currents Lane, Harwich, Essex CO12 3DE. Tel: 240371.

SWAPLINE

Amiga user wishes to swap software with other users around the world. Latest titles only. We have large selection, send list etc to Martin, 1086 Beach Road, Torbay, Auckland 10, New Zealand.

Amiga. Nemesis are searching for hot contacts. Only brand new games are wanted. Swap, sell or buy. It's up to you! Write to: Nemesis, PO Box 348, 6400 Sonderborg, Denmark. No Lamers!

Swap Akai Hifi tape deck, tuner amplifier, Hitachi speakers plus collection of tapes for Atari 520ST. Cash adjustment if necessary, or any reasonable offers. Phone Steve on (0429) 269344.

PEN PALS

Wanted Amiga users to swap programs etc . . . All letters will have a reply. Write to Tony, 85 Hillview Gardens, Cheshunt, Herts. EN8 0PD. Tel: 0992 30324.

W.O.W. wants to have new contacts on the Amiga. Write to PB 709, 9000 Gent 1, Belgium, or call 003291 254456. Answered 100% especially overseas (Try it!).

Amiga contacts wanted around the world, fast reply guaranteed. Write to: DAZ, 2 Park View, Arrow, Alcester, Warks B49 5PN or phone (0789) 400262 between 4pm and 7pm.

Amiga owner wants pen pals worldwide to exchange hints, solutions etc. I will answer all letters the same day. Write to: Richard Goulstone, 93 Hall Ave, Mangere, Auckland, New Zealand.

Amiga freak – is in search of any good contacts in order to swap any stuff and tips. Also buying CBM64 soft. Write or phone: 01 209 1240 – 14 Middleton Road, London. NW11 7NS. Ask for Nik.

Amiga user wants Amiga pen pals and contacts from all over the world. Guaranteed reply. Write to Marcel, 12 Kingsford Street, Maroubra 2035 Sydney, N.S.W. Australia.

Atari St pen pals wanted worldwide. All letters answered. Write to Derren Pyatt, 4 Falcon Close, Cheslyn Hay, Walsall, West Midlands WS6 7LJ, England.

Amiga owner, 24, also interested in RPG's and some board games, would like to hear from others to swap hints, tips and conversation. Write to Neil McInnes, 99 Braehead Road, Glenburn, Paisley PA2 8NF.

Lonely Nintendo family computer owner likes to be pen pals with anyone with the same computer or Nintendo Entertainment System. Please write as soon as possible to Kenneth Chau, 36 Alloway Street, Ayr KA7 1SH Scotland.

Dutch Amiga user wants to have pen pals and contacts all over the globe. Write to Lucke Ramakers, Burgemeester Petersstraat 35, 6321 DD Wylre, Holland.

Amiga and ST owner wishes to swap the latest games. Write to Ian Johnson, 12 North Street, Abercynon, Mid-Glamorgan CF45 4ST.

Amiga pen pals wanted from all over the world. Write to Roy Lew, Unit 3/31 Argyle Ave, Chelsea 3196 Victoria, Australia. All letters answered.

Atari ST pen pals wanted. Anyone from anywhere. 18 year old into arcade games, sport simulations, videos, Morrissey and armchair American football. Why not write to: Steven Drake, 82 Fearnley Street, Watford, Herts. WD1 7DD, England.

Amiga user wishes to swap hints etc to anyone anywhere. Send letters to Ben, 8 Argosy House, Pepys Estate, Deptford, London SE8 3QZ.

Amiga users wanted to swap programs tips, hints, everything. Write to Will Williams at 30 Norman Road, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 1DU or phone 0492 78471.

USER GROUPS

Nemesis is searching for members all over the world. Send demo/intro to: Nemesis, PO Box 348, DK-6400 Sonderborg, Denmark. No lamers please!

The ST User Group, 10 Teesdale Court, London Rd, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 5AS. The newsletter (6 every year) contains new, reviews, tips, letters plus an arcade section in issue 3. For more details write or phone 01-560 0806 ask for Chris.

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SAM

The secrets of a new machine

After two years of development, Miles Gordon Technology have finalised the design of their SAM home micro, due next spring. And its specs will astound anyone who thought we'd reached the end of the 8-bit road. TGM sent an expert, Simon N Goodwin, to report on Britain's next new micro.

SAM is cheap and runs much existing Spectrum software, yet it has 256K of RAM, 64 colours, and seven-channel sound.

It first came to the public eye a year ago, when our Spectrum sister magazine CRASH reported that MGT were planning a 'super Spectrum' – compatible with thousands of existing Spectrum programs, but with modern graphics, sound, disk and memory expansion.

Since then the SAM design has grown steadily more ambitious. Spectrum compatibility and low pricing are still major features, but the new sound and graphics modes have attracted attention from major software houses, who plan to produce software specifically for SAM.

SAM will initially be available in two versions. The cassette model will sell for 'under £150', while the disk version with built-in 780K 3.5" disk drive will cost £199. You can upgrade either model to 512K of RAM by buying two extra chips.

Sound and vision

SAM has four graphics modes, with varying colour and point resolutions. All the modes can use a hold and modify facility, à la Amiga, to display the full range of 64 colours onscreen at one time, from SAM BASIC or machine code. You can swap between modes at any time, and keep screens in several different modes in memory all at once.

Mode 1 is like the old Spectrum display – fast to program, but with restrictions on the position of colour changes. You can stick with the normal eight Spectrum colours, plus 'bright' variations, or reprogram the display to change the colours on standard 48K Spectrum games.

SAM may finally give Spectrum games proper 'metallic' spaceships, rather than the Lego-style colours of the original Spectrum!

You can also use the palette to resolve clashes in games that juxtapose similar colours like green and cyan, or red and magenta.

Mode 2 is a cross between attribute and bitmapped graphics, with two colours chosen from 16 on each line of eight dots.

Mode 3 gives 512x192 resolution, with each point in any one of four colours. This mode allows a 24-line 85-column text display – best viewed on a monitor, unless you've got a really good TV – or 24 lines of 64 columns on a TV.

Mode 4 has the same 256x192 resolution as the Spectrum, but each dot can be independently set to one of 16 colours, with no attribute clash at all.

As for sound, SAM's seven channels include one simple mono channel for 48K Spectrum compatibility, plus a six-channel stereo sound chip – much superior to the three-channel AY-3-8912 used in CPCs, STs and 128K Spectrums.

SAM programmers can 'pan' sounds independently across the stereo image. The Mullard SAA-1099 chip contains six frequency generators, two 'noise' generators – for explosions and suchlike – and 12 amplitude controllers.

Interfacing

Unlike older cheap micros, SAM comes plastered with built-in interfaces. You can use a TV display, with sound through the telly, or an RGB monitor with stereo sound through your hi-fi or Walkman.

There's a full MIDI interface, and you can also plug in a cassette drive, mouse, trackball, autofire joystick, light pen and parallel printer.

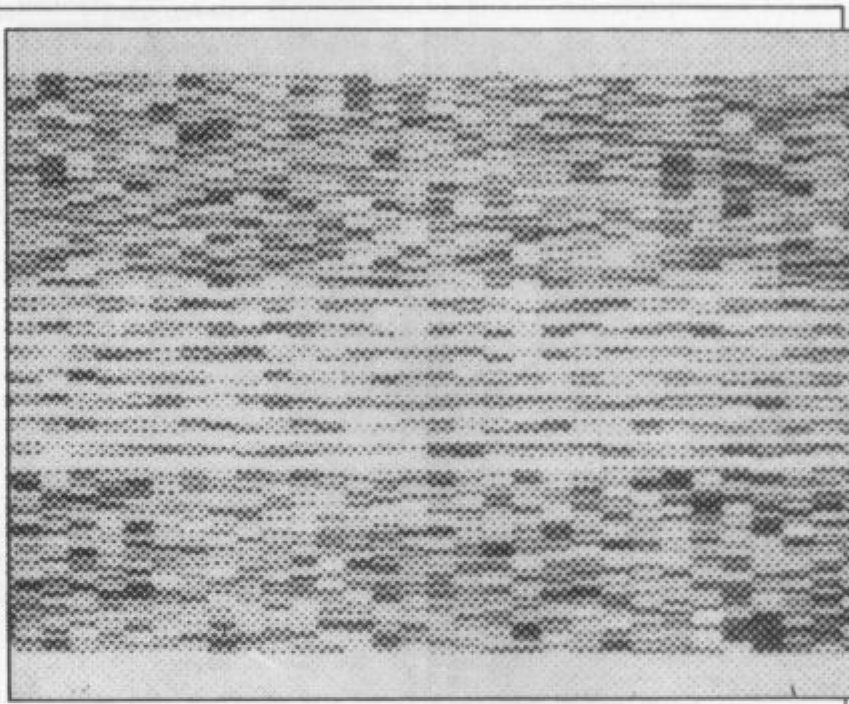
The built-in network (first revealed in TGM**010**) lets up to 64 machines send messages back and forth or share disks or printers over the network.

SAM has a proper socket for add-ons, rather than a Spectrum-style edge connector. You can still use cheap and widely-available Spectrum interfaces, via a small adapter.

MGT intend to produce a buffered 'microframe' for people who need to plug several things in at once - this will be more costly than Sinclair-style throughports, but should be a lot more reliable.

Flexibility

The new machine also has unusually flexible memory paging, so it can pretend to be several computer systems at one time. You can load a 48K Spectrum game into one part and a graphics package into another, and draw a map as you play the game, swapping back and forth at the press of a key.



Business and educational users can use the same trick to swap between applications without reloading. It's not true multitasking, but it's a step in the right direction.

The SAM processor is a Zilog Z80B running at 6MHz – 50% faster than the Z80A in Amstrad's Spectrum, PCW and CPC computers. And the Z80B processor makes SAM a fast, compatible way to run classic CP/M software, including Infocom games and tools like *WordStar*, *Supercalc* and *Turbo Pascal*.

The built-in structured BASIC interpreter is written by Andy Wright, author of the Spectrum add-on language Beta BASIC. SAM runs ZX BASIC programs, converting them automatically after loading, but internally it's a completely new BASIC. It has fashionable features for graphics and procedural programming, plus extended addressing so that programs and arrays can fill memory.

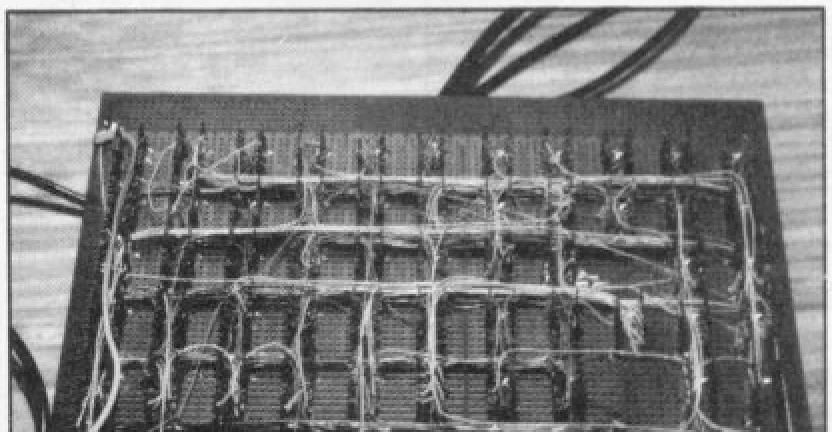
This is a big advance over 8-bit machines like the Spectrum and PCW, which limit code to 32-64K sections.

How do they do it all? Well, SAM is built around an ASIC (application-specific integrated circuit), a custom chip which replaces scores of standard components.

The low chip count helps keep costs down – SAM has eight chips in all, against 20 in the £199 Spectrum +3 and 60-plus in 16-bit computers.

■ SAM production is scheduled to start in February, with machines available by April or May. At first, the machine will be available only on mail order from MGT – we'll keep you posted on how to order it, and for how much.

Component supplies for the first 56,000 machines have been guaranteed, but the price may go up or down after then, depending on chip costs. Chips, currently expensive, are widely expected to get cheaper during 1989 – but no-one's guaranteeing anything.



It's not the end of the line for 8-bits

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UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) Name the nauseating android bear who became a kid's best seller during Christmas 1986.

2) What is the origin of the word MODEM, and what does a modem do?

3) Unscramble the software titles from these seasonal telegrams, 'IRK CREAM SANTA GUT', 'LIT OR BUM XMAS'.

4) When did Gremlin's *Pink Panther* originally appear, and what was it?

5) Which late lamented boffin presented TV's *The Mighty Micro*?

6) When was the Compact Disc launched in the UK?

7) What difference will Batman notice in Robin when DC comics bring the little twerp back to life?

8) In 1928, E.M. Forster predicted a supercomputer suffocating humanity. Name the book.

9) Fill in the missing words, Abigail, Lizzie, Charlotte, William, John, Jim, Annie, Tim, Richard, David, Not now . . .

10) What is a LAN a WAN and a TAN?

11) In order of appearance, name all the actors who have played Doctor Who.

12) Which Ultimate classic was the smash of Christmas 1984?

13) What do you call 144 computer programmers?

14) Who first documented the concept of a mathematical language being used to communicate between remote terminals? **a)** Plato, **b)** a Potato, **c)** Jules Verne?

15) Which hippy software house was run by Pete the Hat?

16) How many vertical scanning lines are there in the following TV systems: NTSC, SECAM/PAL, HDTV?

17) What happened to Haresoft's 'real life adventure game' *Masquerade*? What happened to the gold and jewel prize on 5th December 1988, and why? **18)** Name the Z-88 on-board utility, **a)** Pipe Cleaner, **b)** Up Your Pipe, **c)** Pipe Down.

19) What is a DIN plug?

20) Spot the odd one out, *Puss In Boots*, *Mother Goose*, The Gallup Software Charts, Income Tax.

ANSWERS

1) Teddy Ruxpin
2) A combination of modular demodulator: converting a digital signal into an analogue signal, and vice versa (also used by patronising waiters when addressing women)
3) *Track Suit Manager*, *BMX Simulator*
4) The title sequence in the 1963 Blake Edwards film. The Pink Panther was a stolen jewel
5) Chris Evans PhD. R.I.P.
6) 1983
7) None. Robin will be a girl, but Batman won't notice the difference.
8) *The Machine Stops*
9) 'DARLING, I've got a headache'
10) Local Area Network, Wide Area Network, Expensive
11) William Hartnell, Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee, Tom Baker, Peter Davison, Colin Baker, Sylvester McCoy
12) *Knight Lore*
13) Gross incompetence
14) Plato, 428-348 BC in *The Republic*
15) Salamander
16) 525 lines, 625 lines, 1125 lines
17) It flopped and Haresoft went bust. The winner, Mr Dennis Cross, went bankrupt and auctioned off the prize
18) No
19) Something to shove in your ears when they play that bloody Christmas compilation tape in the pub
20) Income tax. The rest are all fairy tales



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All that glitters is not sold

New consoles and computers may sound wonderful – but they're often just too good, argues Barnaby Page

If all that they're saying about the Flare One is true, it's the ultimate computer of our time (or console: what's the difference? A console is just a computer without some input/output facilities.) Listen to this: 512x256 definition, built-in genlock overlays, custom sound and video chips, blah blah blah, and all for a knockdown £200-odd.

Only trouble is, it doesn't really seem likely that the Flare will be released, now or ever. There are undoubtedly elements of it in the Konix Slipstream (see this month's news), though Konix will privately stress that the Slipstream *isn't* the Flare One, it just shares some ideas.

But it's ironic that this ultimate machine may never appear, a bit like the previous venture of its designers Martin Brennan, Ben Cheese and John Mathieson – the souped-up Spectrum, Loki. Because what's the reason current rumour gives for the Flare's fizzling? It's just *too* good; and to manufacture something so triffically brill would cost too much.

I knew this would happen, as all moaning prophets say. Sooner or later, in our quest for ever-higher resolution and ever-faster processors and ever-whizzier graphics-handling and ever-less-tinny sound, we were bound to run up against the problem that computer users, or at any rate hyped-up computer journalists, want more than the real world can deliver.

Take the Acorn Archimedes – *please* take it, as Acorn said. There you've got the cheapest 32-bit machine around (68020-based Apple Macs and – Amstrad notwithstanding – 80386-based PCs still command a price way above Archie's entry-level £801.60). You're about to have a new RISC (reduced instruction set computing) chip upgrade, available to existing users for just £29 come spring. You've got a minimum memory of 512K.

You've also got a 4,096-colour palette, 16-colour resolution of up to 614x512, ridiculously generous 16-channel stereo sound and so on.

But – and it's a bigger but than a dinosaur's – software houses have not exactly flip-flopped over the Archimedes. True, there are many specialist scientific, programming and graphics packages available, as well as a fair-sized handful of games.

Yet if anyone's to produce software that would *really* use the machine's full potential, it will take them a long time in development. And they'll want a lot of Archimedes-owners out there – a large user base, as the jargon has it. But if anyone smart is going to buy the machine, they'll want the software base in place *before* they fork out.

Vicious circle, GOTO loop, ring-a-ring-a-roses, call it what you will, it's the problem that will face any computer or console that's too good for a market where low prices still rule. (It's surprising, mind you, that the Archimedes 310M hasn't taken off much faster – with a colour monitor and PC emulation thrown in for £1,280, it would seem to offer all the businessman's heart could desire. But that's a different story.)

The price of success

How, then, does a new machine succeed? We need to know this today, because all around are launches: the Slipstream, the this-year-next-year-sometime-never Flare One, Sega's Megadelve, the long-awaited 16-bit Nintendo II, various portable/console/super STs, the MSX2+, and SAM, the subject of a detailed analysis in this month's Back Bytes.

The essential thing is a guarantee – not 'your money back if you're not satisfied in seven days', but a guarantee to software houses that there will be users and vice versa.

With the Slipstream, Konix seem to be some way toward achieving this – certainly, British software houses were falling over themselves earlier this winter to get in Konix's good books. There's also the advantage (to Konix) that none of the other console biggies have really concentrated on – dare one say cared about? – Britain, so there's an army of potential gamesters out there just dying for a chance in a hydraulic chair.

Sega's 16-bit Megadelve console, due to be launched next autumn, will go the way of all silicon unless Virgin Mastertronic (the Japanese firm's UK representatives) push it a bit harder than the existing Sega.

The Nintendo II is several years off, and even Nintendo themselves – in the shape of their UK agent Mike Wensman – recognise that software is the problem there. It can take at least a year to write a decent 8-bit Nintendo game, according to Wensman, and obviously writing for an unfamiliar, complex machine will be more . . . well, unfamiliar and complex.

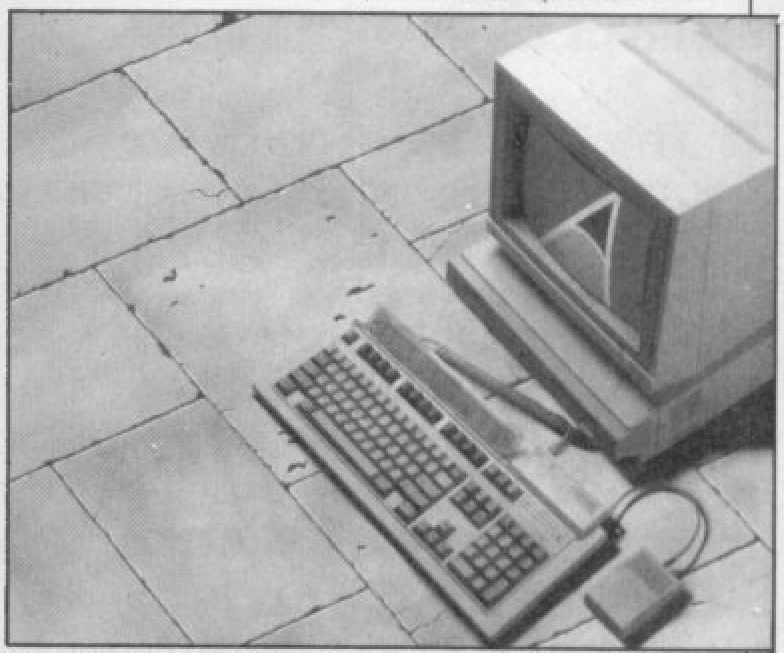
Still, according to Wensman, that pays off. In Japan, he claims, *Legend Of Zelda* sold a mind-boggling million copies on its first day of release, and it does provide 260 hours of play.

The new STs will be extensively written about, 'exclusively' reviewed in posh computer magazines, push forward the barriers of digital technology as we know it, and then quite possibly disappear into the morass. They do, however, have the advantage of compatibility with existing ST software, which may lure people who really want a portable or a super ST. On the console front, I'm not so sure; the Slipstream just sounds to good, and the PC Engine's no slouch either.

"The new STs will be written about, exclusively previewed, and then disappear"

The MSX2+, if it's ever released in Britain, cannot be expected to change the face of anything, however good it is; with a few exceptions, notably Konami, software houses are already too far removed from the MSX road to get back in gear.

And that leaves SAM. It's a nice, simple 8-bit computer, nothing too flashy, compatible with much of the ginormous base of Spectrum software, yet it sounds good. The resolution, colour palette and seven-channel sound are all substantial improvements on a Spectrum, and even with a disk drive (fortunately 3.5") SAM will only be £199.



The Archimedes: were Acorn too smart for their own good?

The one word of warning is that Miles Gordon Technology are a small company, and won't be able to push SAM much on TV or in the national press – not at first, at least.

Therefore they won't enjoy megasales (apparently recognising this and deciding to cut their losses, they're putting it out on mail order before risking the high street anyway). Therefore there won't be much SAM-specific software, and therefore . . .

But this is where the loop stops. SAM *already has* a substantial software base thanks to the Spectrum sales achieved by Sir Clive and Big Al (Sinclair and Sugar).

So it's ironic, again, that of all the new machines, it may be a humble ol' Z80-based Speccy variant that stands the best chance.

The Games machine

NEXT MONTH

The shape of things to come

■ Programmer Jez San writes exclusively for TGM on the creation of a 16-bit mega game

■ The complete guide to buying second hand micros – bargains, pitfalls and what to look out for

■ Life at long distance. TGM reports on ISDN – it's going to revolutionise gaming as we know it. Find out how the tele communications explosion is going to change the world

■ More winning entries from the Newsfield computer art exhibition

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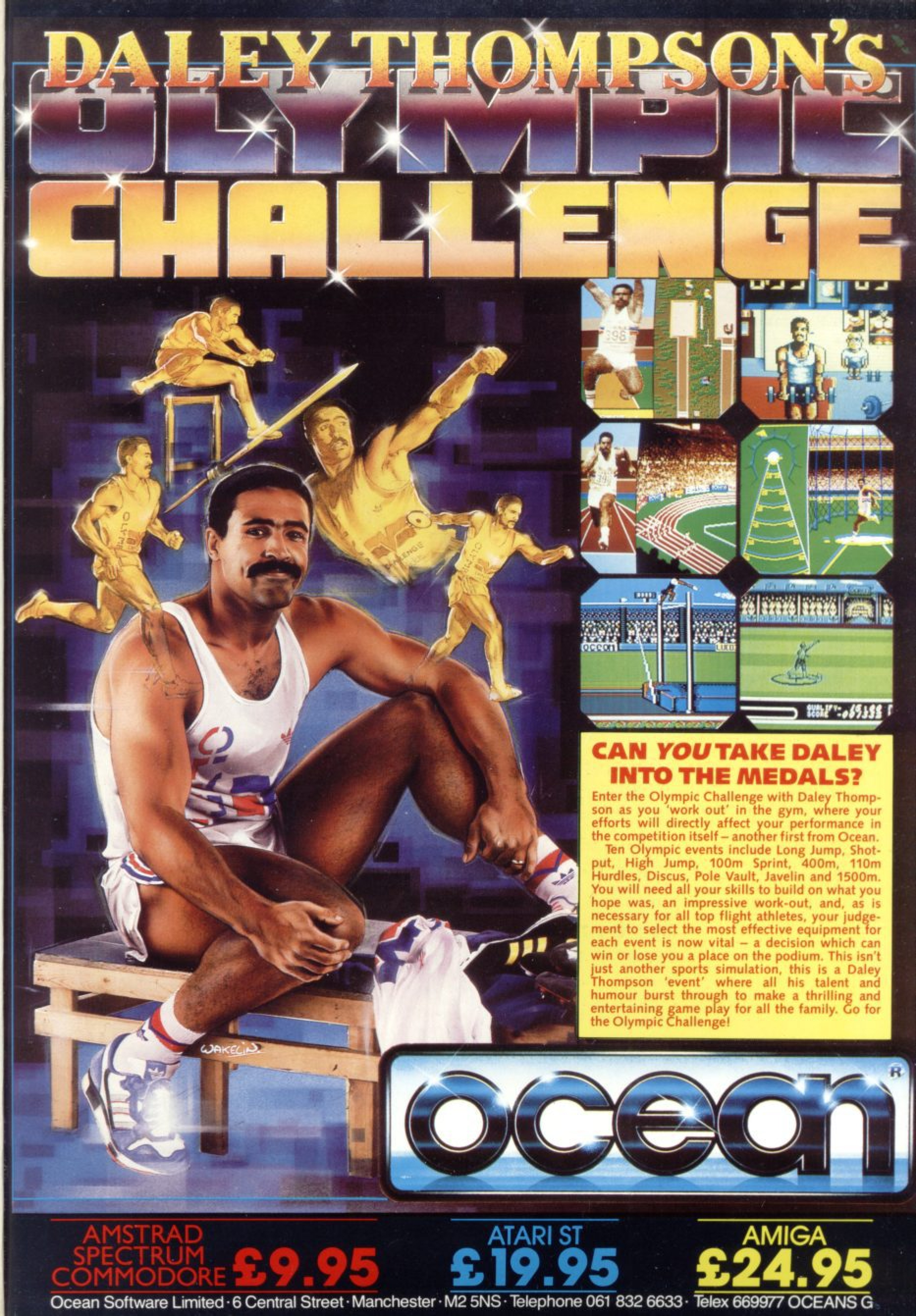
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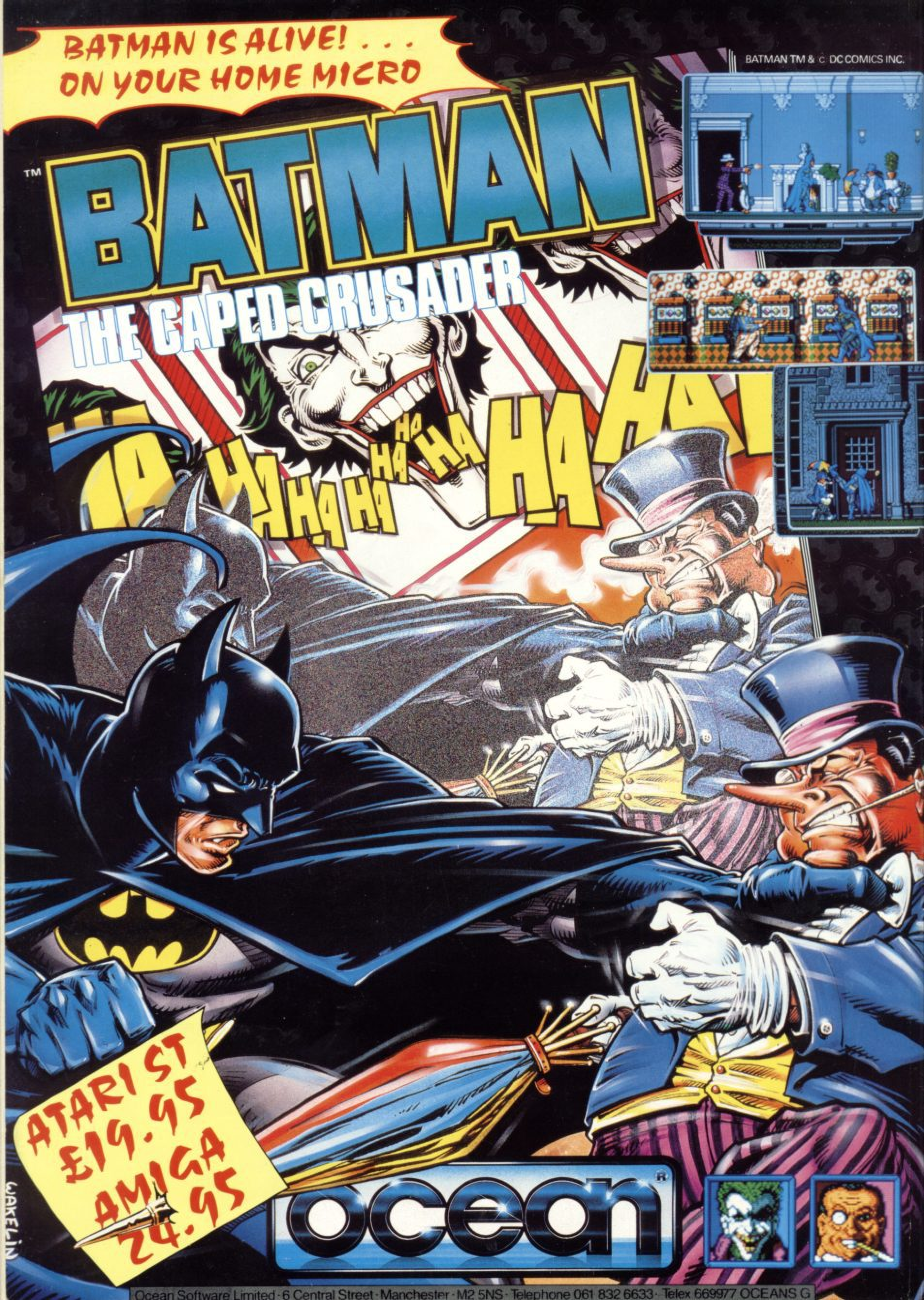
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